

Help Doctor Flu - and exterminate flu bugs this winter



Addenbrooke's and the Rosie Hospitals has today

(Monday 1 October) launched a Doctor Who inspired campaign, which encourages staff to get protected with a flu jab this winter.

It is being promoted with the help of a life-size cut-out of Doctor Flu, who will be popping up in staff vaccination areas complete with knitted scarf, stethoscope and sonic syringe.

Doctor Flu, a campaign by the CUH's Occupational Health and Communications teams, will generally be found hot on the heels of a flu germ Dalek accompanied by the strapline "Exterminate flu this winter!"

Last year the Trust, which ran a flu campaign on a Ghostbusters theme, encouraged more than 86 per cent of its staff to get vaccinated and won a national NHS Flu Fighters award. It was the top performing hospital of its size.

Getting a jab not only means staff are less likely to pick up, or pass on, the virus to patients, but it also ensures a more resilient workforce when the hospital and public most needs it most. It also makes financial sense.

Despite a national flu outbreak last year, the Trust weathered the storm thanks to factors including a comprehensive winter plan, dedicated staff and the media sharing key messages from the hospital in a timely way.

Medical Director Ashley Shaw said the Trust is taking the

flu threat just as seriously this year and it wants the public to do the same. Over 65s, those with long-term health conditions such as severe asthma or heart disease, carers, pregnant women, children aged two to eight, and others at-risk should have their free flu vaccine at their GP surgery or school.

Contrary to popular myths the vaccine, which can be purchased at some pharmacies, cannot give you flu as it is a completely inactivated vaccine which doesn't contain a live virus.

A few people may experience mild cold-like symptoms for up to 48 hours, which is the body's way of telling you it is making antibodies. The most common side effect reported is some slight swelling in the area around the injection site.

Dr Shaw added: "The risk of having a serious anaphylactic reaction from the flu jab is less than one in a million and is much, much lower than the risk of getting seriously ill from having the flu itself.

"Our message is be like Doctor Flu - and help exterminate the flu this winter!"
More information about the flu vaccine is available from NHS Choices or your GP.