

From the Chief Medical Officer
Dame Sally C Davies

 **Department
of Health**
Richmond House
79 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2NS
Tel: +44 (0)20 7210 5150-4
Fax: +44 (0)20 7210 5407
Sally.Davies@dh.gsi.gov.uk
www.dh.gov.uk/cmo

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Ailsa Bosworth
Chief Executive
National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society

BY EMAIL

Dear Ailsa

Seasonal flu vaccination for people with underlying health conditions

I am writing to you to urge your support of this winter's seasonal flu vaccination programme.

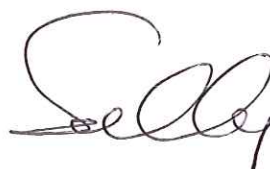
For healthy individuals, flu is usually an unpleasant but otherwise self-limiting disease with recovery within a week. However, the risk of serious illness from flu is higher among certain groups of the population, such as older people, and people of any age with an underlying health condition, including conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, and suppressed immune systems.

People with clinical risk factors are eligible to receive the seasonal flu vaccine free each winter. Despite the risks they face from flu, only 50% of people in clinical risk groups received the flu vaccine last winter. I think this figure is too low, and we need to do better.

This is where I need your support. I want to see more people who are vulnerable to flu receiving the vaccine so that we prevent more cases of serious illness, and even deaths. I would be very grateful if you would alert your members to the increased risk that seasonal flu poses to them; and encourage them to get vaccinated as soon as possible at the start of the seasonal flu immunisation programme in October.

Please do let me know if you need any further information on seasonal flu vaccination to use with your members.

Yours ever



**DAME SALLY C DAVIES
CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER
CHIEF SCIENTIFIC ADVISER**