

Prescribing Antivirals for Flu in Care Homes GM ICB (Bolton Locality)

Contents

1	When to consider using Antivirals?	1
1.1	Which patient groups?	1
1.2	How to make a diagnosis for Influenza like Illness (ILI) in a Care Home?	1
1.3	When to suspect an outbreak	1
1.4	Post exposure prophylaxis	2
2	What Antivirals to use?	2
3	Access to Antivirals – local ANTIVIRAL stocks	2
4	Prescribing Antivirals for patients with renal impairment	2
5	Consent	3
6	Prescribing Antivirals in season	3
7	Prescribing Antivirals out-of-season	3
8	Out of hours	3
9	Appendix A: Antiviral prescribing flow diagram	4
10	Appendix B: Antiviral Prescribing Summary	5
10.1	Dose of Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) for adults (>13 years)	5
10.2	Dosing for Zanamivir (Relenza®)	5
	References & useful documents	6

Antivirals (Antivirals) may only be prescribed by General Practitioners in England under GMS regulations when the Chief Medical Officer has announced that influenza is circulating in the community. For flu out breaks in care homes out of flu season a different mechanism for prescribing and has been agreed ([Prescribing antivirals out-of-season](#))

1 When to consider using Antivirals?

UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) recommends the targeted prompt use of antivirals as follows¹:

- 1.1 **Which patient groups?**
 - Treatment of uncomplicated influenza among specific at-risk groups (including patients over the age of 65)
 - Treatment of complicated influenza regardless of underlying individual risk factors
- 1.2 **Influenza post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) among care home residents in at-risk groups in specific outbreak situations (see section 1.3 & 1.4)**

How to make a diagnosis for Influenza like Illness (ILI) in a Care Home?

The combination of a **temperature over $\geq 37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$ with acute onset of respiratory symptoms** is enough to consider influenza e.g. cough (+/- sputum), hoarseness, nasal discharge/congestion, wheezing, shortness of breath, sore throat, sneezing

OR an acute deterioration in physical or mental ability without other known cause

Older persons may not always develop a fever with influenza; if an influenza outbreak is suspected due to respiratory symptoms or acute deterioration in physical or mental ability without fever:

- 1.3 **Appropriate respiratory samples should be taken to confirm diagnosis**
 - Ideally, treatment should begin within 48 hours of onset of symptoms
 - During flu season treatment can be commenced based on clinical suspicion, there is no need to await laboratory results - if these come back as negative, treatment/prophylaxis can be discontinued. For information see section 7 [Prescribing antivirals out-of-season](#)

When to suspect an outbreak

An outbreak is defined as **two or more cases** which meet the clinical case definition of ILI arising within the same 48-hour period with an epidemiological link to the care home.

In the event of a suspected outbreak please contact the Bolton Community Infection Prevention Control Team (CIPCT) 0900 to 1700 Mon-Fri on 01204 390892 (excluding bank holidays) to report a suspected outbreak and/or for advice. Out of hours contact UKHSA North West, Greater Manchester Health Protection Team on 0344 225 0562 (option 3) and ask for the health protection practitioner on call.

Date approved	26/09/2024	Review date	20/10/2025	Page 1 of 6
Expiry date	25/09/2026	Version	4.0	

Prescribing Antivirals for Flu in Care Homes GM ICB (Bolton Locality)

Post exposure prophylaxis

As detailed in [UKHSA Guidance](#), Antivirals can be considered for post exposure prophylaxis (PEP): • Among care home residents in at-risk groups (including patients ≥65) during influenza outbreaks in care homes, regardless of their vaccination status.

- Prophylaxis should:
 - Ideally be started within 48 hours of exposure when using oseltamivir and 36 hours for zanamivir.
 - Targeted to those who are most likely to have been exposed to cases of influenza.
- 1.4 • It may not be necessary to provide prophylaxis to all residents home if the outbreak is confined to distinct floors/units. The Infection Control Team/UKHSA will provide advice to support the decision.
- If you prescribe prophylaxis and later you receive confirmation that influenza was not the cause then discuss the options with the care home around their ability to store the medication safely in case the patient requires prophylaxis later in the season. Consider the risks of accidental use, the date of expiry, the risk of the patient requiring a different dose/treatment against the desire to reduce waste and have rapid access to medication if they are required in the near future.

2 What Antivirals to use?

Treatment: First-line; oral Oseltamivir

Prophylaxis: Oseltamivir or zanamivir

Choice will depend on the health status of the resident, the time lapse from diagnosis of active case and characteristics of the dominant circulating strains. Oseltamivir can be considered 1st line unless prescribers are informed by the Infection control team or members of UKHSA. Details about the choice of antiviral, their dosage and mode of administration can be found in the [UKHSA guidance](#) on use of antiviral agents².

If there are concerns about high attack rates or high case fatality rates, prophylaxis could be considered more than 48 hours after contact with a case or for longer durations following a risk assessment of the situation and consultation with UKHSA; however it should be noted that such use is currently unlicensed and very rare.

3 Access to Antivirals – local ANTIVIRAL stocks

To avoid delay in treatment prescriptions should be directed to Nash Pharmacy who holds stocks of oseltamivir (Tamiflu) 75mg and 30mg capsules for the Bolton area:

[Nash Pharmacy Ltd](#), 63 Castle Street, Bolton, BL2 1AD ([MAP](#)). Tel: **01204 363030**

Opening hours Monday- Friday 9am-6pm; closed: Saturday Sunday.

[Sykes Pharmacy @ Landmark](#), Landmark House, 12 Chorley Rew Road, BL1 4AP ([MAP](#)) Tel: **01204 529111**

Opening hours Monday- Sunday 9am-8pm.

Prescriptions can be taken to other pharmacies but these will have to order the stock, which will cause a delay in accessing treatment and should be avoided.

Prescriptions for Zanamivir (Relenza®) are rare and the product is short dated so a stockholding is not kept in Bolton. They can be ordered in for next delivery; check when delivery will be and if necessary, use alternative pharmacies for quicker access.

4 Prescribing Antivirals for patients with renal impairment

The dose of oseltamivir should be reduced in known renal impairment (creatinine clearance <60ml/min) (see Appendix A).

Advice from the British Geriatrics Society, November 2017¹, on considering renal function in an emergency outbreak response is as follows:

- Renal function documented in last 6 months and no renal impairment → standard dose
- Renal function documented in last 6 months and renal impairment identified → adjusted dose

Date approved	26/09/2024	Review date	20/10/2025	Page 2 of 6
Expiry date	25/09/2026	Version	4.0	

Prescribing Antivirals for Flu in Care Homes GM ICB (Bolton Locality)

- No routine renal function results in past 6 months → high likelihood of renal impairment in the care home population → reduced dose as per CrCl of 31-60 mL/min
- Do not routinely measure renal function and wait for results to come back as this will delay treatment
Appendix A describes dosages for treatment and prophylaxis depending on weight and renal function.

5 Consent

Where possible, it would be helpful to document consent status for care home residents prior to the flu season, where rapid prescribing decisions for Antivirals may need to be made.

6 Prescribing Antivirals in season

During the in-season period (once the Department of Health has announced that there is an increase in influenza circulating in the community and antivirals can be prescribed at NHS expense), the need for assessing and **prescribing** of Antivirals is part of the GMS contract. If antivirals are required, they can be prescribed on a FP10 and supplied through any community pharmacy (however to avoid delay and to ensure sufficient stocks during outbreaks we would advise sending prescriptions electronically to our local stockholding pharmacies, see section 3 above). The prescription must:

- Be issued in line with the Selected List Scheme (SLS) criteria.
- Must contain the SLS designation see: <http://www.drugtariff.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/#/00673401-DB/DB00672828/In> England.

Please ensure when issuing prescriptions electronically that you change the nominated pharmacy for that issue **ONLY** and that you inform the care home staff that the prescription has been sent.

7 Prescribing Antivirals out-of-season

GPs and primary care prescribers cannot prescribe Antivirals under GMS regulations outside the flu season (flu season is usually between Dec/Jan to April/May as confirmed by the CMO letter). Outside flu season antivirals are likely to be recommended by The Health Protection Team only when influenza is laboratory confirmed.

If advised to prescribe antivirals by Bolton Infection Prevention and Control Team or UKHSA Health Protection Team, an FP10 marked as '**convenient stationery**' should be used and prescriptions sent electronically to our local stockists, as in section 3 above.

Please ensure when issuing prescriptions electronically that you change the nominated pharmacy for that issue **ONLY** and that you inform the care home staff that the prescription has been sent.

8 Out of hours

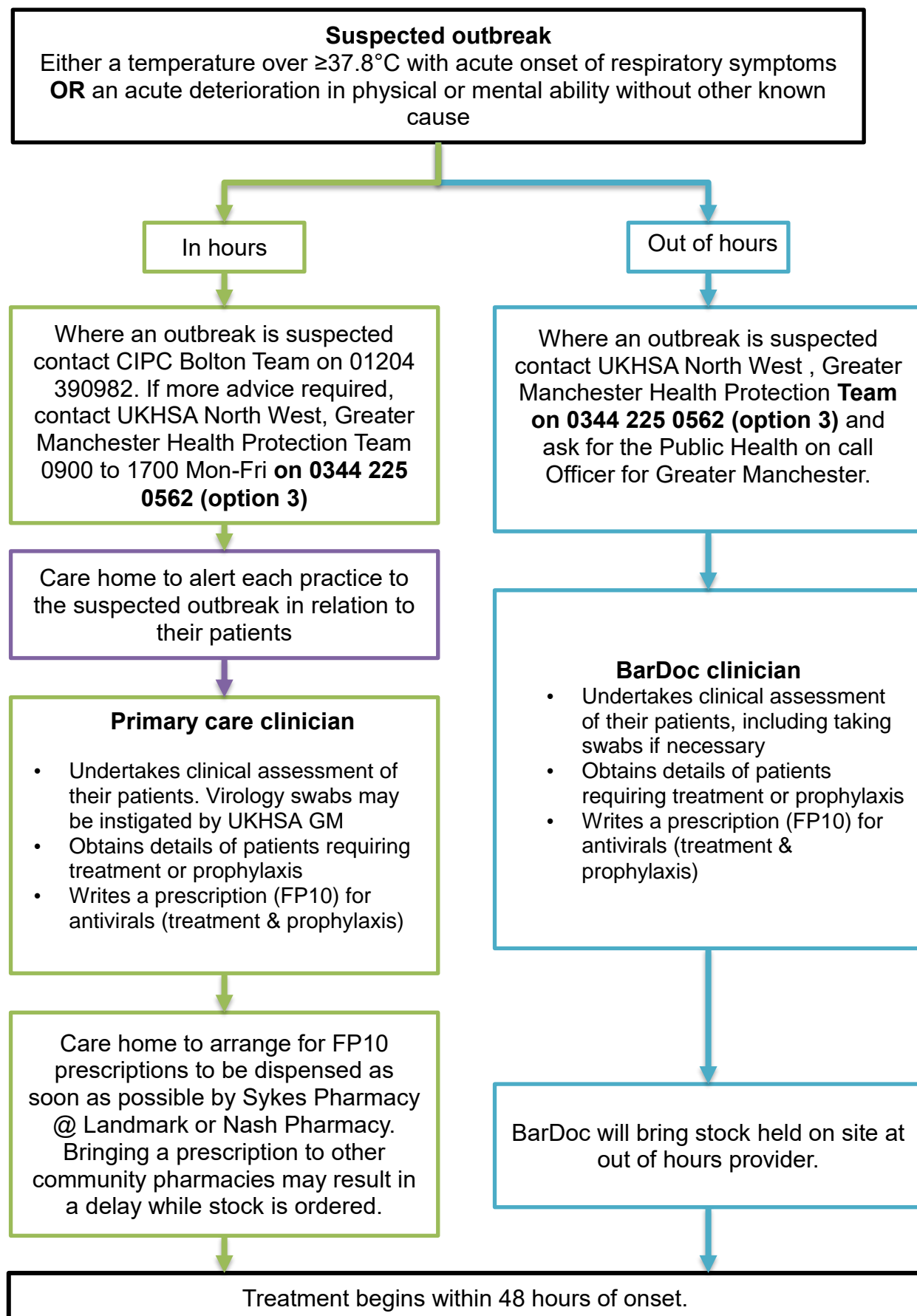
On rare occasions there will be a need for ANTIVIRAL prescribing for care home residents out- of-hours (weekday evenings, weekends). The out of hours provider is BarDoc. Phoning the patients GP service will provide you with the contact details for this service. A stock of antivirals is held at Bardoc sites for use out of hours which will be provided to care homes if they have suspected cases on assessment by BarDoc staff.

Ensure oseltamivir is prescribed for either treatment or prophylaxis within the licensed 48 hour window, or zanamivir is prescribed for prophylaxis within the licensed 36 hour window.

Date approved	26/09/2024	Review date	20/10/2025	Page 3 of 6
Expiry date	25/09/2026	Version	4.0	

Prescribing Antivirals for Flu in Care Homes GM ICB (Bolton Locality)

9 Appendix A: Antiviral prescribing flow diagram



Prescribing Antivirals for Flu in Care Homes GM ICB (Bolton Locality)

10 Appendix B: Antiviral Prescribing Summary

First-line = Oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) orally **Second-line** = Zanamivir (Relenza®) following specialist advice

For severely immunosuppressed patients please seek specialist advice

Dose of Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) for adults (>13 years)

Creatinine clearance	Prophylactic dose Oseltamivir(Tamiflu®)	Treatment dose Oseltamivir(Tamiflu®)
Cr cl > 60 mls/min*	Weight > 40kg 75mg daily x 10 days	Weight > 40kg 75mg bd x 5 days
	Weight 23-40kg 60mg daily x 10 days	Weight 23-40kg 60mg bd x 5 days
Cr cl > 30 to 60 mls/min*	30mg daily x 10 days	30mg bd x 5 days
Cr cl > 10 to 30 mls/min*	30mg every other day for 10 days	30mg daily for 5 days
Cr cl < 10 mls/min *(no dialysis)	Not recommended (no data available)	
Swallowing difficulties/ enteral tubes	Capsule contents can be dispersed in liquid NOTE: Bitter taste so for oral administration mixing with 5ml of sugary liquid or suitable sweetened food product recommended (see patient information leaflet for information on adding to flavoured syrup or sugar water)	

* MDCalc <https://www.mdcalc.com/creatinine-clearance-cockcroft-gault-equation> can be used to calculate creatinine clearance

This is a more accurate method of making dosage decisions than eGFR. If no routine renal function results are available in the last 6 months, follow advice on prescribing of antivirals in renal impairment section above.

Note: Weight is only a consideration for creatinine clearance above 60, below 60 the dosing is the same for all weights.

10.2

Dosing for Zanamivir (Relenza®)

Prophylactic dose Zanamivir (Relenza®)	Treatment dose Zanamivir (Relenza®)
10mg daily (2 x 5mg by inhalation) x 10 days	10mg bd (2 x 5mg by inhalation) x 5 days
No dose modification needed for renal impairment	

For advice on the prescribing and/or supply of antivirals, please contact the Medicines Optimisation Team on gmicb-bol.medicinesoptimisationenquiries@nhs.net

For virology medical advice please contact CMFT advice line 0161 276 8788 Option 2.

(Please refer to latest guidance at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-treatment-and-prophylaxis-using-anti-viral-agents>)

Prescribing Antivirals for Flu in Care Homes GM ICB (Bolton Locality)

References & useful documents

- Guidelines on the management of outbreaks of influenza-like illness in care homes
– Updated July 24
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/acute-respiratory-disease-managing-outbreaks-in-care-homes>
 - UKHSA guidance on use of antiviral agents for the treatment and prophylaxis of seasonal influenza Version 11, November 2021
[Guidance on use of antiviral agents for the treatment and prophylaxis of seasonal influenza \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/guidance/guidance-on-use-of-antiviral-agents-for-the-treatment-and-prophylaxis-of-seasonal-influenza)
 - NICE Technology Appraisal 168 Amantadine, oseltamivir and zanamivir for the treatment of influenza, Published 2009
<https://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/ta168>
- Tamiflu® SPC <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/20294>
 Relenza® SPC <https://www.medicines.org.uk/emc/medicine/2608>

This information was adapted from Trafford CCG Antiviral information and Herts Valley CCG Antiviral information as part of version 1

DOCUMENT CONTROL PAGE			
Version 4.0			
Title of document	Prescribing Antivirals for Flu in Care Homes GM ICB (Bolton Locality)		
Supersedes	None		
Target audience	Primary Care, Care Homes, Out of hours services.		
Reviewed by	Jole Hannan - Senior programme manager – Medicines Management		
Original author(s)	Jole Hannan – Interface Pharmacist, Bolton CCG Chris Haigh – Head of Medicines Optimisation, Bolton Locality Adrian Byrne – Medicines Optimisation Pharmacist, Bolton Locality		
Approved by	1. Medicines Group		26/09/2024
Final date approved	14/11/2024		
Review date	20/09/2025	Expiry date	25/09/2026
Any supporting document(s) to be included or linked with this document: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-treatment-and-prophylaxis-using-anti-viral-agents			
Reference(s): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/influenza-treatment-and-prophylaxis-using-anti-viral-agents			
Latest update From version 3.0 the following has been updated : opening times of both pharmacies, hyperlinks and references updated.			