

# **NHS Lothian issue up to date advice on dealing with respiratory viruses**

**NHS Lothian say that an increasing number of respiratory viruses in Lothian is adding extra pressure on the hospital system.**

Cases of Flu are surging and there are still high levels of Covid and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), as well as norovirus, causing hospitals and GPs in Lothian to be stretched beyond capacity.

Calum Campbell, Chief Executive, NHS Lothian, said the sector as a whole was already experiencing significant pressures because of an increase in emergency patients and large numbers of delayed discharge patients, before this latest increase in infection rates.

He added: "Our teams across the health and social care system are facing sustained and relentless challenge. The system is under horrendous pressure and the challenges our teams are facing are uncharted.

"We are experiencing more cases of infection – flu, Covid and RSV, as well as norovirus – than ever before.

"In order to maintain our patient flow through the hospital and retain beds for the most urgent of cases, we need to support people to go home quicker after their treatment and reduce any preventable admissions. That is where the public can help.

“Please take sensible precautions to prevent infection, especially if you have underlying health conditions or plan to be with those that do.”

## **FULL CAPACITY**

The Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh, St John’s Hospital, the Western General Hospital and the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People are all at full capacity.

Dona Milne, Director of Public Health and Health Policy, NHS Lothian, urged people to help reduce the spread of infections to protect themselves and the most vulnerable in their communities.

She said: “Although they can be mild infections for many, RSV and Flu can be extremely serious for some people causing them to require urgent hospital treatment. We have now reached extraordinary levels of flu in Scotland that we haven’t seen for many years.”

“We are asking anyone who has cold or flu like symptoms to help limit the spread of infection and reduce the chances of passing it to someone who will become very unwell.

“Stay at home if you feel unwell. And if you do have to go out, please wear a mask. People should also remember to wash their hands, and cough or sneeze into a tissue and bin it.”

As another bank holiday weekend approaches, people in Lothian are also being reminded to stock up their medicine cabinets with paracetamol and cold remedies so they can treat common illnesses at home.

Anyone who has cold type symptoms, such as a runny nose or mild cough, or who has a sore throat without a temperature and can eat and drink, is likely to have a viral illness and does not need to contact their GP. They should drink plenty of fluids and rest and get additional help and advice from NHS

Inform or their local pharmacy.

The most up to date information on Strep A can be found at <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/infections-and-poisoning/streptococcus-a-strep-a/>