

**Dementia Advice**  
**Sheffield** 

**DEMENTIA FRIENDLY FLU  
VACCINATIONS  
FOR  
SHEFFIELD CARE HOMES**

*Jab & Jive*



# PURPOSE

The purpose of this guide is to support residents with dementia in Sheffield care homes to reduce distress and increase engagement amongst their residents living with dementia. Evidence from The Alzheimer's Society suggests that people with dementia are approximately 40 times more likely to die if they catch flu than those who have no other underlying health conditions.

Reports suggest that administering the flu jab to residents with moderate to advanced dementia can be challenging. This guide aims to help think creatively about this and find ways to alleviate distress whilst turning the vaccination programme in to an enjoyable experience for residents, their families & staff.

# THEMED EVENT

Activity coordinators are a fantastic asset in making the flu jab process a sensory, enjoyable experience.

We recommend the use of props and/or fancy dress items as a starting point, in order to create a 50's/60's/70's theme. Encourage your team to use items such as headscarves, red lipstick, neck-a-chiefs, A-line skirts, wigs etc to act as a visual point of focus to aid reminiscence and discussion.

In the run up to the vaccination day, themed crafts could be created by residents and staff to reinforce a sense of ownership and aid orientation with the theme. This might be "peace symbols", decorative flowers, jukebox papier mache and more! These can be displayed for the event.

In addition, try to enhance the overall atmosphere with the use of music and/or a personalised playlists. Research has proven the paramount importance of music to aid people with dementia's wellbeing. This could be meaningful songs from each resident's lives, which might be sought by asking family and friends too. Favourite artists or genre's might also help, for example 1960's television theme tunes. These can be used collectively to set an atmosphere, or personally to help relax and soothe a particular resident if they are feeling anxious, stressed or upset.

You could start the day with a themed breakfast could set the scene & create a social atmosphere. You could try something new like pancakes & maple syrup, croissants, waffles... or go for something more traditional but special, like a full English, bacon sarnies or some 1950's/60's/70's recipes! If people can be involved in the baking, cooking, preparing, try to encourage them!

# TOP TIPS WHEN GIVING THE FLU JAB TO PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA

Here are our top tips to make the flu vaccination experience in your care home as relaxed, effective and enjoyable as possible:

- ❖ **Make what is about to happen as understandable as possible. This might look like:**
  - Easy read information
  - Pictures
  - Mimicking the action
  - Watching a video
  - Have family/friends explain the situation (in person, via video call, pre-recorded)
  - Watching another person have the jab.
  
- ❖ **Explain why the jabs are happening concisely: "it is prevent the flu/stop you getting the flu/so you don't get poorly".**
  
- ❖ **Use an honest but concise explanation just before administrating "this will hurt a bit Mrs Jones but I'm going to hold your hand until it's over".**
  
- ❖ **Offer tactile reassurance; hold a hand, put an arm around the person's waist, gently stroke/massage their other arm/hand, put your hand on their shoulder.**
  
- ❖ **Use positive, relaxed body language; have an open posture, say hello & address the person by name, offer them a smile & a hug**
  
- ❖ **Always ask permission, "Can I do it now please?"**
  
- ❖ **Make connections for reassurance between residents & staff e.g "I had mine earlier/yesterday/last week and it ached a little, but not for long"... "Maureen had hers a minute ago & said it was ok, didn't you Maureen?"**
  
- ❖ **Don't be put off or alarmed if the person doesn't react well at first, keep persevering to try & "meet" the person at a positive, relaxed point in their day. This might be at 3am, 2pm, or 6pm – always be guided by the person's body language, demeanour, facial expressions and direct communication attempts.**
  
- ❖ **Make after the jab a themed party much like the breakfast idea.**