

Britain's first swine-flu trials under way

11 August 2009

Britain's first swine flu vaccine trials, led by the University of Leicester and University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, are taking place at the Leicester Royal Infirmary.

Dr Iain Stephenson, a consultant in infectious diseases at the hospital and clinical senior lecturer at the University, has been carrying out research into [swine flu](#) and has published academic papers on the subject.

Now he is working with 175 volunteers, aged 18-50, as part of research to develop a [vaccine](#) against the virus.

The volunteers were recruited in the last week of July ago and blood samples are now being taken to detect how much immunity the drug gives. Earlier research by Dr Stephenson and colleagues already established that two doses of the vaccine would be needed to build up immunity.

Results from the trials are expected in September.

Dr Stephenson, of the Department of Infection, Immunity and [Inflammation](#) at the University of Leicester, said: "The aim is to find out how many doses and what type of vaccine is needed to give protection. This will help with planning the vaccine campaign across the country.

"It is almost certain two doses of vaccine will be needed. Unlike seasonal flu, where people's bodies are partly primed to fight the virus, swine flu is a new infection none of us has met before. The vaccinations during the trails are being given between one-three weeks apart

"Because of this your body needs a priming dose and then a boosting dose. The lower the dose the more of the vaccine can be shared among the population. The trial will also help determine how far apart the injections need to be given."

Earlier this year, in his paper published in PNAS- Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences

of the USA- Dr Stephenson made the first case for a pre-pandemic vaccine to mitigate the worst effects of [pandemic flu](#).

He said: "This study is the first to show an effective pre-pandemic vaccine approach. This means that we could vaccinate people potentially many years before a pandemic, to generate memory cells that are long lasting and can be rapidly boosted by a single dose of [vaccine](#) when needed."

Source: University of Leicester ([news](#) : [web](#))

APA citation: Britain's first swine-flu trials under way (2009, August 11) retrieved 23 November 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-08-britain-swine-flu-trials.html>

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