

A third of nurses will refuse to have the swine flu jab

By Daniel Martin

Last updated at 2:07 AM on 18th August 2009

Up to a third of nurses will say no to the swine flu jab because of concerns over its safety, a poll has found.

NHS workers are first in line for the vaccine, but a survey of 1,500 nurses found many will reject it.

Last night a Government scientist condemned the results saying nurses who do not have the jab are putting patients at risk.



Up to a third of nurses will say no to the swine flu jab because of concerns over its safety, a poll has found

Nevertheless the poll, by Nursing Times magazine, will raise questions over the Government's planned mass vaccination programme.

Of 1,500 readers, 30 per cent would not say yes to the vaccine, while 33 per cent said maybe. Just 37 per cent said they would definitely have the jab.

Of those who said they would refuse the jab, 60 per cent said their main reason was concern about the safety of the vaccine.

A further 31 per cent said they did not consider the risks to their health from swine flu to be great enough, while 9 per cent thought they would not be able to take time off work to get immunised.

Some 91 per cent described themselves as frontline nurses.

One told the magazine: 'I would not be willing to put myself at risk of unknown long-term effects to facilitate a short-term solution.'

Another added: 'I have yet to be convinced there is a genuine health risk and it's not just Government propaganda.'

But Professor David Salisbury, the Department of Health's director of immunisation, reckoned it was unfortunate nurses would 'knowingly leave themselves at risk'.

He added: 'They have a duty to their patients and they have a duty to their families. I think you solve those responsibilities by being vaccinated.'

And Chief Nursing Officer Christine Beasley insisted: 'Frontline nurses will be absolutely crucial in the height of a pandemic without them, patient care will suffer and the NHS will be stretched.'

'Getting the vaccine will protect nurses and their patients. That's why we're offering frontline nurses the vaccine as a top priority.'

The jab, currently being fast tracked, will not be fully tested before it is administered.

There will be no tests at all carried out on children under three, even though babies and children at high risk will be among the first to get the vaccine.

There are also concerns the jab can cause Guillain Barre Syndrome, which can lead to paralysis and even death.

A mass swine flu vaccination in the U.S. in 1976 caused far more deaths than the disease it was designed to combat and the Health Protection Agency watchdog has asked doctors to be on the lookout for cases of GBS.

Last week Chief Medical Officer Sir Liam Donaldson announced the jab will be given to high-risk groups with asthma or diabetes, as well as health workers.

Some 14million will be covered by the first wave of the vaccination programme.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-1207270/A-nurses-refuse-swine-flu-jab.html#>