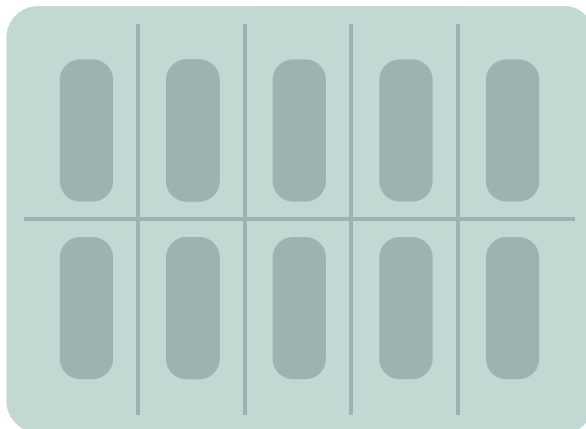## WHAT HAVE THE UK GOVERNMENTS BEEN DOING TO PREPARE?

We have been planning for a flu pandemic for a number of years, and the UK plan has been identified as one of the best by the World Health Organization.

While the current situation is serious, there's good reason for us to be confident that we can deal with it. Thanks to the work of scientists who have studied previous pandemics, we know more now about treatments and how to stop the virus spreading than ever before.

We have a good stockpile of antiviral drugs (including Tamiflu® and Relenza®) – enough to treat more than 33 million people (half the UK population), and we are planning to increase this.

Antiviral drugs are not a cure, but they help you to recover if taken within 48 hours of symptoms developing, by:

Relieving some of the symptoms.

Reducing the length of time you are ill by around one day.

Reducing the potential for serious complications, such as pneumonia.

IS THERE A VACCINATION I CAN HAVE?

Not at this stage. This type of flu is not the same as seasonal flu: it involves a completely new type of virus. A vaccine can only be developed when the specific strain has been identified, and it would then take several months to produce.

The UK governments have agreements in place with manufacturers so that we can get stocks as soon as possible after a vaccine has been developed.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MYSELF AND OTHERS AGAINST FLU?

The best thing you can do to protect yourself is to follow good hygiene practices. These will help to slow the spread of the virus and will be the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself and others from infection.

When you cough or sneeze it is especially important to follow the rules of good hygiene to prevent the spread of germs:

Always carry tissues.

Use clean tissues to cover your mouth and nose when you cough and sneeze.

Bin the tissues after one use.

Wash your hands with soap and hot water or a sanitiser gel often.

There's a simple way to remember this:
CATCH IT, BIN IT, KILL IT.