

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **The 2009 Influenza Season “Staying Informed and Being Prepared”**

The flu activity continues to rise and CDC reports that most states are reporting widespread influenza activity. Thus far, most of the flu activity continues to be the 2009 H1N1 flu (sometimes called "swine flu"). It is predicted that both the 2009 H1N1 flu and the seasonal flu will cause illness, hospital stays and deaths this season.

Healthcare official and providers continue to urge all individuals to take precautions to protect themselves and other from both the 2009 H1N1 flu and the seasonal flu. While flu vaccination is not mandatory, remember that it is highly recommended for all priority groups. If you are not in one of the priority groups for the Seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 flu vaccine, remember the CDC recommends that you take every precaution to protect yourself and others from influenza. CDC recommends that you follow the 3 steps listed below:

#### **Take Everyday Preventive Actions**

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.)
- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other measures to keep our distance from each other to lessen the spread of flu

#### **Take the Time to Get a Flu Shot**

- CDC recommends a yearly seasonal flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against seasonal influenza.
- While there are many different flu viruses, the seasonal flu vaccine protects against the three seasonal viruses that research suggests will be most common.
- Vaccination is especially important for people at high risk of serious flu complications, including young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older.
- Seasonal flu vaccine also is important for health care workers, and other people who live with or care for high risk people to keep from making them sick.
- A seasonal vaccine will not protect you against 2009 H1N1.

- The new H1N1 influenza vaccine is now available. Priority groups should receive the H1N1 influenza vaccine as soon as possible.
- People at greatest risk for 2009 H1N1 infection include children, pregnant women, and people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease.
- Ask your doctor if you should get a 2009 H1N1 vaccine if you are unsure.

**Take Flu Antiviral Drugs if your Doctor Recommends Them**

- If you get seasonal or 2009 H1N1 flu, antiviral drugs can treat the flu.
- Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body.
- The priority use for antiviral drugs this season is to treat people who are very sick (hospitalized) or people who are sick with flu-like symptoms and who are at increased risk of serious flu complications, such as pregnant women, young children, people 65 and older and people with chronic health conditions. (Most people have been able to recover at home from 2009 H1N1 without needing medical care and the same is true of seasonal flu.)
- Antiviral drugs can make illness milder and shorten the time you are sick. They may also prevent serious flu complications.

Most people with the 2009 H1N1 flu and the seasonal flu have had mild illness and have not needed medical care or antiviral drugs. However, some people are more likely to get flu complications and they should talk to a health care provider about whether they need to be examined if they get flu symptoms this season. For more information, contact your local medical provider or visit [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu).

If you do get sick with flu-like symptoms this flu season, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to get medical care. CDC recommends that you stay at home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other things you have to do and no one else can do for you. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine, such as Tylenol®.) You should stay home from work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings.

Remember, you may have the flu if you have some or all of the following symptoms:

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|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| fever*                          | cough                |
| sore throat                     | runny or stuffy nose |
| body aches                      | headache             |
| chills                          | fatigue              |
| sometimes diarrhea and vomiting |                      |

**\*It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.**

The following recommendations have been made on who should get vaccinated against the seasonal flu and the 2009 H1N1 flu.

The Seasonal flu vaccine is recommended for the following groups:

- anyone who wants to **reduce the likelihood of becoming ill** with influenza or **spreading influenza to others**,
- all children **6 months and older** and **older adults**,
- anyone at **risk of complications from influenza**, or more **likely to require medical care**,
- anyone who lives with or care for people at high risk for influenza related complication.

The H1N1 flu vaccine is recommended for the following groups:

- Pregnant women,
- People who live with or care for infants younger than 6 months of age,
- Health care and emergency medical personnel (First Responders)
- Anyone from 6 months through 24 years of age,
- Anyone from 25 through 64 years of age with certain chronic medical conditions or weakened immune system.

As more H1 N1 influenza vaccine becomes available, healthy individuals age 25 – 64 years and adults 65 and older should also be vaccinated

Hoke County Health Center continues to administer flu vaccines. The health department in collaboration with the Hoke County Schools continues to administer the Seasonal Flu Mist in the elementary schools. The health department is only administering the H1N1 influenza vaccines in the “nasal mist” and the “flu shot”. The health department no longer has seasonal flu vaccine.

To date, the following doses have been administered:

625- Doses Seasonal Flu Mist	in	5 Hoke County Elementary Schools
450 Doses Seasonal Flu Mist (2yrs to 18yrs)	at	Health Department
400 Doses Seasonal Flu Shot (2yrs to 18 yrs)	at	Health Department
440 Doses Seasonal Flu Shot (Adults 19 & Older)	at	Health Department
350 Doses H1N1 Flu Mist	at	Health Department
486 Doses H1N1 Flu Shot	at	Health Department

Flu vaccines will continue to be administered to the recommended groups until supplies are depleted. Flu vaccines are available during normal working hours according to the following schedule:

Monday through Friday      8:00 am to 11:30 am & 1:00 pm to 4:30 pm. **Appointment Only**

Additional influenza clinics will be held this week after hours for those individuals in recommended groups who are unable to come in during normal working hours.

Monday through Thursday      5:00 pm to 7:00 pm      **Walk In Only**

and  
November 14, 2009 (**Saturday**) 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM. **Walk In Only**  
( **Senior Service Building in the old Armory during the Diabetes Health Fair.**)

Important instructions regarding Flu clinics at the health department are as follows:

1. You do not have to be a registered health department patient to receive either the seasonal or the H1 N1 influenza vaccine.
2. You do not need an appointment during after hours and Saturday Flu clinics.
3. When coming in for a flu shot, please wear short sleeves or loose fitting shirts or blouses so the nurses can easily expose your arm in order to administer the vaccine.
4. Please be sure to bring your insurance information with you. The health department can bill Medicaid, Medicare and other insurances for administration of the seasonal influenza vaccine.
5. Individuals who are 60 years of age and older who have no medical insurance coverage can receive the seasonal influenza vaccine at **NO CHARGE. (while supplies last)**
6. The cost of the seasonal influenza vaccine for all other uninsured individuals is \$34.
7. The H1N1 influenza vaccine is available to the priority groups listed above at **NO CHARGE.**

To schedule an appointment for a flu vaccine or to ask questions, contact Hoke County Health Center at 910-875-3717.

For more information about seasonal and novel H1N1 influenza, visit [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu), [www.hokecounty.org](http://www.hokecounty.org) or contact your local Health Department at 910-875-3717.

Information in this news release was gathered from the following websites: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and [www.ncpublichealth.com](http://www.ncpublichealth.com).