

Addus HealthCare

H1N1 Flu - Informing and Preparing Employees

(H1N1 is formerly known as Influenza A and Swine Flu)

Every flu season has the potential to cause a lot of illness, doctor's visits, hospitalizations and deaths. CDC is concerned that the new H1N1 flu virus could result in a particularly severe 2009-2010 flu season. Vaccines are the best tool we have to prevent influenza. CDC hopes that people will start to go out and get vaccinated against seasonal influenza as soon as vaccines become available at their doctor's offices and in their communities. The seasonal flu vaccine is unlikely to provide protection against 2009 H1N1 influenza. However a 2009 H1N1 vaccine is currently in production and may be ready for the public mid October. The 2009 H1N1 vaccine is not intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccine – it is intended to be used along-side seasonal flu vaccine.

The CDC recommends that the following groups receive the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine:

- **Pregnant women**
- **Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age**
- **Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel**
- **All people from 6 months through 24 years of age**
- **Children from 6 months through 18 years of age** because cases of 2009 H1N1 influenza have been seen in children who are in close contact with each other in school and day care settings, which increases the likelihood of disease spread, and
- **Young adults 19 through 24 years of age** because many cases of 2009 H1N1 influenza have been seen in these healthy young adults and they often live, work, and study in close proximity, and they are a frequently mobile population; and,
- **Persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza.**

No shortage of 2009 H1N1 vaccine is expected, but vaccine availability and demand can be unpredictable and there is some possibility that initially, the vaccine will be available in limited quantities. Once the demand for vaccine for the prioritized groups has been met at the local (Over)

level, programs and providers should also begin vaccinating everyone from the ages of 25 through 64 years. Current studies indicate that the risk for infection among persons age 65 or older is less than the risk for younger age groups. However, once vaccine demand among younger age groups has been met, programs and providers should offer vaccination to people 65 or older.

Prevention continues to be the best practice. Common sense measures can reduce but not prevent the spread of influenza. The most important is to stay home if you're sick. If you have fever, stay home for at least 24 hours after you have no fever when you're off all fever reducing medications. Also, of course, cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze or wash your hands frequently.

Remember the 3 C's:

Clean – Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, then use an alcohol-based hand rub (sanitizing gel) to wash your hands

Cover – Cover mouth and nose with tissues when coughing and sneezing to prevent germs floating in the air. If tissues are not available, use your elbow to cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.

Contain – If ill stay home from school or work, avoid crowds and this will prevent further spreading of germs. If someone coughs and sneezes keep a 6 foot distance. Spread the word on prevention!!!

Additional Resources:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu>
- A source for updated information on influenza is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Hotline at: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636). This line is available in English and Spanish, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- www.addus.com – We will be updating our website with new information
- Local Health Department

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