

H1N1 Vaccine Priority Groups

Influenza Hotline: 1-800-447-1985

As shipments of the 2009 H1N1 vaccine continue to be limited and sporadic, Harrison County Home & Public Health will continue to consistently follow the five target groups that appear to be at highest risk for influenza-related complications. These target groups include:

- Pregnant women
- Household and caregiver contacts of children younger than 6 months of age (e.g. parents, siblings, and daycare providers)
- Persons from 6 months – 4 years of age
- Persons aged 5 – 18 with chronic medical conditions associated with a higher risk of influenza complications

These target groups are not intended to deny 2009 H1N1 vaccine to anyone who wishes to be vaccinated; it is to try and provide the vaccine to people at highest risk for complications first. Most people who get the flu (either seasonal or 2009 H1N1) will have mild illness, will not need medical care or antiviral drugs, and will recover in less than two weeks. Some people, however, are more likely to get flu complications that result in being hospitalized and occasionally result in death. Pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus infections, and ear infections are examples of flu-related complications. Once we have met a significant portion of the demand in the above priority groups and vaccine supply increases, our target groups will expand to include more individuals.

Current studies and data collected across the country of people who have become ill with the H1N1 virus indicate that the risk for infection among persons age 65 and older is less than the risk for younger age groups. The average age for persons hospitalized with the H1N1 virus has been individuals in their twenties and approximately 70 percent of people who have been hospitalized with this 2009 H1N1 virus have had one or more medical conditions previously recognized as placing people at “high risk” of serious seasonal flu-related complications. This includes pregnancy, diabetes, heart disease, asthma and kidney disease.

Harrison County Home & Public Health is asking that people who fit into one or more of the categories above call our office at 712-644-2220 or email our office at krife@harrisoncountytia.org to leave your name, telephone number, date of birth, and the priority group you fit into so that we can call you when the appropriate type of vaccine is available. Once vaccine is available and we begin to use our call list, we will ask some additional screening questions to ensure the vaccine we have is appropriate for you or your child. Walk-ins will be discouraged, as vaccine availability cannot be guaranteed due to the limited supply.

The vaccine is available in two forms: injectable (shot) and the intranasal (mist) and both in very limited supply. We want to encourage all persons eligible to receive the mist to receive the H1N1 vaccine in the mist form as some populations at very high-risk for influenza-related complications are not eligible to receive the mist (pregnant women, children with chronic medical conditions including asthma, and others) and must receive the injectable form. We want to ensure it is available for them. The H1N1 nasal spray is as effective and safe as the seasonal FluMist product.

Children nine years and younger need to have two doses of the H1N1 vaccine administered at least four (4) weeks apart. Persons 10 years and older will receive one dose.

Until the H1N1 vaccine is more widely available the most important thing you can do to protect yourself is to remember the 3 Cc: Cover your cough, Clean your hands, and Contain germs by staying home when you are ill.

Since the vaccine is being allocated to states on a staggered basis over the coming weeks, you may contact Harrison County Home & Public Health at (712) 644-2220 or our website <http://www.harrisoncountytia.org/publichealth/index.html> for information about vaccine availability and vaccine clinic sites. For a map of vaccine clinic sites in Iowa, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/webmap/default.asp?map=h1n1_vaccine_sites.

###