



STATE OF OHIO

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OHIO'S TRADITIONAL FLU SEASON JUST AROUND THE CORNER

H1N1 virus not the only flu expected to circulate this year

COLUMBUS – While pandemic H1N1 flu has had an unusually strong impact on teenagers and young adults, those at highest risk for complications from seasonal flu – including young children, pregnant women, people with chronic medical conditions and the elderly – should also remember the importance of protecting themselves against seasonal influenza.

Most of the flu circulating now is H1N1; however, seasonal flu viruses may become more prominent as the traditional flu season in Ohio – typically November to mid-March – approaches.

Pneumonia is the most common complication associated with flu and causes more than 3,000 deaths annually in Ohio, placing flu and pneumonia among the top 10 causes of death in the state. Nationwide, influenza and its complications cause some 36,000 deaths and 200,000 hospitalizations annually, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Limited supplies of H1N1 vaccine are being prioritized to high-risk populations. While no such restrictions are in place for seasonal flu, the Ohio Department of Health particularly encourages all people at high risk for complications from seasonal flu to seek a seasonal flu vaccine if it is available.

Those recommended to receive a seasonal flu vaccination include children 6 months up to their 19th birthday, pregnant women, people 50 years of age or older, people with chronic medical conditions, people who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities, and people who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from the flu (including health care workers, household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu, and household contacts and caregivers of children less than 5 years of age with particular emphasis on vaccinating contacts of children less than 6 months of age).

The seasonal flu vaccine is available at most private physicians, local health departments, and many retail pharmacy chains. To search for a seasonal flu vaccine provider, visit the American Lung Association's Flu Clinic Locator at www.flucliniclocator.org.

In addition to being vaccinated, Ohioans can help stop the spread of illness by washing hands thoroughly and often; covering mouths when sneezing or coughing; and staying home from work or school if sick.

For more information about seasonal flu visit www.odh.ohio.gov and search: *Seasonal Flu*.

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