



News Release

For Immediate Release
Thursday, December 17, 2009

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'Tis the Season to Get an H1N1 Vaccine

Officials also announce season's first Tamiflu-resistant H1N1 case

Salt Lake City, UT – As Utahns are out and about finishing up their holiday shopping this week, public health officials and private health care providers are encouraging them to pick up something for themselves – an H1N1 vaccination.

Vaccine supplies are plentiful throughout most of the state, the long lines experienced during previous weeks have disappeared, and most local health departments are now offering vaccine to anybody who needs it – not just those in the CDC priority groups.

H1N1-related illness has decreased over the past several weeks in Utah; however, public health officials anticipate a third wave of disease could strike later this winter and want to immunize as many people as possible before then.

“The timing couldn’t be better; we’re experiencing a lull in the illness coupled with increasing supplies of vaccine,” said Dr. Robert Rolfs, State Epidemiologist with the Utah Department of Health. “If Utahns take advantage of these two factors, we should be able to provide broad community protection against a possible third wave of disease.”

Public health officials also announced they have detected the season’s first case of Tamiflu-resistant H1N1. The case was detected earlier this fall in a male resident of Salt Lake County who is over the age of 65 and has chronic medical conditions. The patient was hospitalized and has been released.

“The potential for these types of cases further illustrate the importance of getting vaccinated,” Rolfs said. “There is no evidence this particular form of the virus has spread from this individual and is circulating in the community; but even if it were the vaccine would provide protection against it.”

- MORE -

Page 2 of 2: 'Tis the Season to Get an H1N1 Vaccine

As of this week the state has received approximately half of all the H1N1 vaccine it is scheduled to receive, and as of Wednesday, Dec. 9, public and private health practitioners had administered approximately 371,532 doses of the vaccine.

“Thanks to a highly dedicated public health workforce, and a strong partnership with practitioners in the private health care sector, we’ve been able to protect hundreds of thousands of Utahns from the H1N1 virus,” said Dr. Audrey Stevenson, Division Director of Family Health Services for the Salt Lake Valley Health Department. “And now that the vaccine is finally arriving in higher quantities, we’re looking forward to extending that protection to even more Utahns.”

Public health officials also want to remind parents that children under the age of 10 need two doses of the H1N1 vaccine, and that the doses should be administered about 28 days apart. The upcoming holiday break provides a perfect opportunity for parents to get their children vaccinated.

In addition to getting immunized, these everyday preventive actions will help limit the spread of germs that cause influenza:

- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or your shirt sleeve;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth – germs spread this way;
- Avoid close contact with sick people;
- Stay home from work or school when you are sick with influenza-like illness for at least 24 hours after your fever has broken and;
- Wash your hands regularly, especially after sneezing or coughing, using soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

For more information on how to prevent influenza and where to find either a seasonal or H1N1 vaccine visit www.utahflufighters.org or dial 2-1-1.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.