

August 26, 2009

## SEASONAL FLU VACCINE FACTS

- Get your seasonal flu shot now. Contrary to popular myth, your immunity will last through the flu season.
- Public health officials recommend everyone who is eligible (anyone over the age of six months) get a seasonal flu vaccine.
- Five to 20 percent of the population gets the seasonal flu.
- No vaccine shortages expected this year. More than 115 million doses are currently being distributed. Private providers have vaccine now and are immunizing the general public.
- It is available as a shot or in nasal spray form.

### ***Symptoms are the same for seasonal flu and pandemic flu.***

- fever (usually high)
- headache
- extreme tiredness
- dry cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle aches
- stomach symptoms can occur in children

Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to five days after becoming sick. That means you may be able to pass the flu on to someone else before you know you are sick.

### ***Recommendations for seeking medical care are the same for seasonal and pandemic flu:***

- Most people with mild symptoms do not need to seek medical care.
- Pregnant people, those with chronic illness, or those who are getting worse (difficulty breathing, fever that does not come down with medicine, or if you cannot keep liquids down) need to consult with their medical provider.

### ***Behaviors to avoid infection are the same for seasonal flu and pandemic flu:***

- If you are sick, stay home from work, school or child care.
- 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, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- If you don't have access to soap and water, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- To further prevent the spread of germs, avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid close contact with sick people

## PANDEMIC FLU FACTS

- A pandemic is a global disease outbreak.
- Estimates on the infection level for H1N1 are purely speculative at this time, but since no one has immunity to this new strain, the infection rate could be 30 percent of the population.
- Vaccine information is fluid and subject to change
- The vaccine will be FDA licensed – it is the same vaccine as seasonal flu, just with a different virus strain. Most people will need two doses, at least three weeks apart.
- Vaccine will be shipped nationwide in October, with more than 65 million doses available by the end of October.
- Tennessee will receive 1.3 million doses shipped out in intervals. The first doses will go to health care workers and emergency responders.
- As supplies increase, vaccine will be available through medical offices, pharmacies, and public health.
- Knox County Health Department has a plan for conducting vaccination clinics to large groups of people, if the need arises. Clinics would be held in large public places around the county with easy access and free parking. Clinics will be well publicized.

### ***During first wave, the CDC has recommended these priority target groups for vaccination, based upon their burden of disease and risk of serious illness:***

- Everyone ages 6 months through 24 years
- All pregnant women and persons living with or caring for infants <6 months
- All health care workers and emergency services personnel
- Persons 25-64 with other medical risk factors

***Information is still emerging – Knox County Health Department will keep you updated or visit [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)***