



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Health departments expect ample supply of flu vaccine, so get immunized

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Influenza immunization clinics are being scheduled throughout the state beginning when providers receive vaccine. County health departments and other health care providers in Alabama expect to have an ample supply of influenza vaccine for the 2010-2011 season.

Annual influenza vaccination is recommended for all persons aged 6 months and older to protect against disease which generally occurs from November to March in Alabama. This year's vaccine protects against three influenza viruses one of which is the H1N1 virus. People who received the H1N1 vaccine last year still need to be vaccinated with the seasonal vaccine this year to have protection against all three flu strains.

"The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that each year in the U.S. between 5 and 20 percent of the population is infected with influenza, about 36,000 people die and more than 200,000 are hospitalized because of influenza complications," said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer. "Contact your private physician or local health department and be immunized to protect yourself and others."

The CDC recommends annual influenza vaccination of all persons 6 months of age and older. Influenza vaccination is especially recommended for the following persons who are at higher risk of influenza-related complications:

- * Children aged 6 months through 18 years, including those on long-term aspirin therapy
- * Adults aged 50 years and older
- * Adults and children with chronic disorders
- * Women who will be pregnant during the influenza season
- * Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
- * Persons who are immunosuppressed
- * Health-care workers
- * Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged 0-59 months and adults ages 50 and older

Anyone else who wishes to reduce the chance of contracting influenza should get a flu shot. Typical symptoms of the flu include fever and respiratory symptoms such as cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headache, muscle aches, and often extreme fatigue. The public is also reminded to follow basic infection control measures to help prevent the spread of the flu. These

include covering the mouth and nose with a tissue or cloth when coughing and sneezing, staying at home when sick, and washing hands frequently.

Contact your private physician or your local county health department for a schedule of flu clinics. For more information contact the Immunization Division of the Alabama Department of Public Health at (334) 206-5023 or toll free at 800-469-4599.

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