



MOORE FROM THE HILL

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We are hearing much in the media about H1N1 flu. I am providing information below on two types of flu, and it is my hope that this information will help you recognize flu symptoms and help you prevent getting the flu.

The flu is a respiratory illness caused by viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness and at times can lead to death. Currently we are contending with the “seasonal flu” and the H1N1 (swine) flu. The CDC (Center for Disease Control) says the best way to prevent the flu is by getting vaccinated against it. The seasonal flu vaccine is available now. According to the CDC, the vaccine for the H1N1 flu will be available by mid October (possibly earlier).

Symptoms of flu are fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, stuffy nose and muscle aches. Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea can also occur, but are more common in children than adults.

Complications of flu can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration and worsening of chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes or congestive heart failure. As you have read in the news, death may occur as a result of the flu.

How flu spreads: Flu viruses are thought to spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of those infected with influenza.

When to get vaccinated against seasonal flu: Yearly seasonal flu vaccination should begin in September, or as soon as the seasonal flu vaccine is available.

Who should get the seasonal flu vaccine each year? Children aged 6 months up to their 19th birthday, pregnant women, people 50 year of age and older, those of any age with chronic medical conditions, people in nursing homes or long term care facilities, and those people who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from the flu are generally advised to get the seasonal flu vaccine. However, always check with your doctor about your specific need for the vaccination.

Who should **not** be vaccinated against seasonal flu? People with severe allergy to chicken eggs, people who have had severe reaction to influenza vaccination in the past, people who developed Guillian-Barre syndrome within 6 weeks of getting an influenza vaccination previously and children less than 6 months of age. Also, those with a moderate or severe illness with fever should wait to get vaccinated until their symptoms lessen.

When to get vaccinated against H1N1 flu: Talk to your doctor about your specific needs. If you are in a "priority group" (see next item) your doctor will probably advise that you get your vaccine as soon as it is available.

Who should get the H1N1 vaccination: Again, talk to your doctor about your specific needs. Noted in the priority groups for H1N1 vaccine are people 6 months to 24 years old, pregnant women, health care workers, parents and caregivers of infants and people with high risk medical conditions. Also discuss with your doctor if there is any reason you should not be vaccinated against H1N1.

PREVENTION REMINDERS: Wash your hands often and long. Emphasize to children they should wash hands with soap and water long enough to sing the entire alphabet song. Also, use alcohol based hand sanitizers. Keep hands away from eyes, nose and mouth. If a flu outbreak hits your area, stay away from public gathering places. Avoid close contact (within 6 feet) with co-workers or customers and keep frequently touched common surfaces (telephones, computer equipment) clean. If you get the flu, stay home!

The above information was excerpted from:
Center for Disease Control at www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm and
www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/public/vaccination_ga_pub.htm
OSHA at www.osha.gov/Publications/protect-yourself-pandemic.html
Metro Public Health Department at www.health.nashville.gov
State Public health Department at www.health.state.tn.us

I sincerely hope you can avoid the flu bug(s). If you want to read more, you can find much more information about seasonal flu and H1N1 flu at the sites listed above.

The information contained in this article is not given as professional or legal advice. Please consult your doctor regarding your need for flu vaccinations or in any health matter.

As always, please let me know if I may help you in any way.

Gary