

One is the typical "seasonal" flu. As in previous years, high risk groups (persons 6 months to 19 years of age, pregnant women in all trimesters, those over 50 years old, healthcare workers, nursing home or long term care residents, household contacts of the aforementioned, those with certain diseases such as asthma, diabetes, chronic heart or lung disease, household contacts or caregivers of infants under 6 months of age) as well as anyone who wishes to be protected from getting the flu are encouraged to receive vaccine. This vaccine is available now. We received a small supply of vaccine and are offering it to our highest priority patients first. We do bill insurances in which we participate.

The extra concern this year is the "novel H1N1" flu (formerly known as Swine Flu). It is different enough from the usual seasonal flu so that a separate vaccine is needed to give protection. Unlike the seasonal flu which is most threatening to the elderly, H1N1 is most threatening to young adults, especially pregnant women. Initial supplies of the vaccine are now available, though the supply is less than expected. More is expected to come later. With the first available supply of H1N1 vaccine, the following groups receive priority: pregnant women, those who live with/care for infants < 6 months, healthcare and emergency medical personnel, persons 6 months to 24 years, persons 25-64 years with high risk medical conditions. It is yet to be determined whether certain groups may need a second shot in order to get adequate protection. Vaccination is of course voluntary, and is considered the best way to protect yourself from serious illness due to influenza. Look on the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) website for other local vaccine clinic sites.

Our advice for pregnant patients:

1. Report all symptoms of the flu or any close exposure to persons with the flu to your doctor immediately. This includes a fever with temperature at 100 F or more, plus a cough and/or sore throat. Antiviral medication may be given to lessen your chance of severe illness.
2. Use acetaminophen ("Tylenol" or generic equivalent) to decrease high fevers during pregnancy. Adults without liver problems may take 650 mg every 4 hours for a maximum of no more than 4,000 mg per day.
3. Make a habit of frequent hand washing. Use the drying towel or paper to turn off the water spigot.
4. Avoid contact with sick persons. If a family member has flu like symptoms, someone other than yourself should take care of them.
5. Receive vaccine as soon as you can for each type of flu. If pregnant (or over 49 years old, or if you have certain chronic diseases), you may get the usual, "inactivated" type which is given as a shot, NOT the "live attenuated" type which is given by nasal spray. Although the seasonal vaccine will be available before the H1N1, you may receive both on the same day if need be.

Other general advice from the Centers for Disease Control:

- **Stay informed.** The CDC website will be updated regularly as information becomes available.

- Influenza is thought to **spread mainly person-to-person** through coughing or sneezing of infected people.

- **Take everyday actions to stay healthy.**
 - 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. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
 - Stay home if you get sick. CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

- **Follow public health advice** regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures.

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The Women's Group