



PUBLIC HEALTH

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Director

Promoting Health. Preventing Harm.

News Release

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2009 H1N1 Vaccine Safety

Influenza Hotline: 1-800-447-1985

As the 2009 H1N1 vaccine continues to arrive across Iowa, Johnson County Public Health officials remind residents the 2009 H1N1 vaccine is safe and effective. “There is a lot of persistent misinformation out there,” said Doug Beardsley, Johnson County Public Health Director. “The 2009 H1N1 vaccine is made by the same process, by the same companies, and tested in the same manner as the seasonal influenza vaccine. There is no reason to believe there are any more risks associated with the 2009 H1N1 vaccine than the seasonal influenza vaccine.”

Public health officials are also responding to concerns about the nasal spray form of the vaccine. “Folks have been hesitant to use the nasal spray because it is a live virus. The complete message is that nasal spray contains an attenuated or weakened virus, which cannot survive outside of the nasal passage and does not cause the flu,” said Beardsley. Nasal spray vaccine has been in use since 2003 and has been proven to be a safe alternative to injections for healthy individuals.¹

In a normal influenza season, the 2009 H1N1 vaccine would have been incorporated into the seasonal influenza vaccine; however, because the seasonal influenza vaccine was already in production when the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus was identified, it was necessary for two vaccines to be created. Next year, the 2009 H1N1 strain will likely be included in the seasonal influenza vaccine.

“The risks associated with not getting the 2009 H1N1 vaccine are far greater than the sore arm or runny nose that may result from getting the shot or nasal spray,” said Beardsley. “This virus has the potential to cause serious illness and death. Receiving the vaccination is an effective way to help fight the spread of the virus.”

The seasonal influenza vaccine and the 2009 H1N1 vaccine can be given at the same time, or in any sequence **with one exception**: if using the live nasal spray vaccine for BOTH the seasonal and H1N1 influenza, they should be given 4 weeks apart to ensure the best protection.

¹ MMWR, July 24, 2009, 58(Early Release); 1-52 [click here](#) for link to web page.

A statewide toll-free hotline has been established for public questions about seasonal and H1N1 influenza at 1-800-447-1985. More information can also be found at www.johnson-county.com or www.idph.state.ia.us.

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