



Public Health News

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Put This on Your Holiday To-Do List: Get H1N1 Vaccine

Vaccine availability has increased; restrictions on H1N1 vaccine lifted

LOS ANGELES - The growing H1N1 vaccine supply, which comprises just over 2.4 million doses available to date in Los Angeles County, has prompted the county Health Officer, Dr. Jonathan E. Fielding, to announce that vaccine can now be provided to individuals outside of the five vaccine priority groups.

"Adequate vaccine supply has arrived in Los Angeles County, allowing providers to administer H1N1 vaccine to any patient over the age of six months for whom it is not otherwise contraindicated," said Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health and Health Officer. "As more H1N1 vaccine becomes available through private doctors and local community health clinics, almost anyone who wants to receive the vaccine should be able to get it. It is important that residents take advantage of the protection that H1N1 vaccine offers, especially during the holiday season where catching the flu means missing planned celebrations or travel."

Certain retail pharmacies should receive at least some H1N1 vaccine by the end of December, and will administer vaccine for a small fee. A limited number of appointments for no-cost H1N1 vaccine will be available at an LA County Public Health center for residents who do not have health insurance or a regular source of health care. For locations and operating hours of clinics or health centers, visit the LA County Public Health website at <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov> or call the LA County Information Line at 2-1-1.

"Though it appears that the second wave of H1N1 flu has peaked, influenza remains active in LA County and most people are still susceptible to becoming ill. Also, we can not determine if there will be a third wave of flu in the future. The H1N1 virus was not detected in the U.S. until late April of this year, and flu season typically lasts until May, so another wave of flu is certainly possible," said Dr. Fielding.

Individuals in the priority groups are still at greater risk of infection and should make a special effort to get vaccinated. If you are in a priority group for H1N1 vaccine and have not yet been vaccinated, it is important that you protect yourself from the flu and from complications that can result from having the flu. The priority groups for H1N1 vaccine are:

- Pregnant women
- People living with or caring for infants under six months of age
- Emergency medical services personnel and health care workers
- Children and young adults from six months through 24 years
- People aged 25 through 64 years with chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease, asthma, diabetes, or weakened immune systems.

While vaccination remains the most effective tool to prevent flu infections, there are also simple, everyday steps that one can take to stop the spread of flu. These include:

- Wash your hands often.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- Avoid close contact with sick individuals
- If you are sick, stay home from work or school

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises more than 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do, please visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov>, visit our YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth>, or follow us on Twitter (keyword: LAPublicHealth).

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