



Polk County Health Department



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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SEASONAL FLU VACCINE IS STARTING TO ARRIVE:

POLK COUNTY: The Polk County Health Department, in a coordinated effort with local medical centers, is urging residents to get their seasonal influenza shot early. Every flu season has the potential to cause widespread illness, increased clinic visits, hospitalizations and even deaths. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is concerned that this could be a particularly severe flu season due to the H1N1 virus circulating at the same time as the seasonal influenza virus.

Seasonal flu shot clinics are now being scheduled at the Polk County Health Department, Amery Regional Medical Center, Osceola Regional Medical Center and St. Croix Regional Medical Center. The seasonal flu vaccine is unlikely to provide protection against the new H1N1 influenza, but it is still important to receive the seasonal influenza vaccine. No vaccine is 100 percent effective against preventing disease, but vaccination is the best protection against influenza and can prevent many illnesses and deaths. Anyone who wishes to reduce their risk of getting influenza should get a flu shot. Some individuals are at higher risk for acquiring influenza and/or may suffer severe complications of influenza. For this reason, the CDC strongly recommends the following populations be vaccinated for seasonal influenza: all children aged 6 months – 18 years of age, persons aged 50 and older, pregnant women, persons with chronic illness or suppressed immune systems, residents of long term care facilities, health care workers, and household contacts and caregivers of any recommended population.

An H1N1 vaccine is currently in production and may be ready for the public by late October. **Remember: the H1N1 vaccine is not intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccine.** The H1N1 vaccine will only protect you from this new strain of influenza. This means that individuals will need to get a seasonal influenza vaccination *and* two H1N1 influenza vaccinations, an initial dose with a booster in 4 weeks.

For comprehensive information on seasonal flu and H1N1 (swine) flu, visit the Polk County Flu website at www.polkcountyflu.com. There you'll find the latest local flu updates. Upcoming vaccination clinic schedules will be posted on the website and in area newspapers as soon as they are available from local health care providers and the Polk County Health Department.