



# Polk County Health Department



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: SEPT. 3, 2009**

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**ORGANIZATION: Polk County Health Department**

**FLU: STATE OF CONFUSION:**

**POLK COUNTY:** The 2009 fall flu season is causing much confusion due to several strains of the influenza virus circulating at the same time. Many questions related to seasonal and novel H1N1 vaccine availability are swirling throughout the county.

Currently, a vaccine for the novel H1N1 flu virus is being tested. The Polk County Health Department and private providers may start receiving vaccine in late October. Initial supplies are going to be targeted toward the following groups who are at higher risk of complications from the novel H1N1 virus: pregnant women, all persons aged 6 months through 24 years of age, people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age, healthcare and emergency services personnel, and people aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza. As the novel H1N1 vaccine supply increases, the Health Department expects to offer community immunization clinics to all those who want the vaccine. It is also likely that two doses of novel H1N1 vaccine will be needed, an initial dose followed by a booster in 3 – 4 weeks.

Seasonal influenza vaccine, however, is now available and all Polk County residents are encouraged to get their annual influenza shot. Seasonal influenza vaccine does not protect against novel H1N1 influenza. **The Health Department has scheduled their first flu shot clinics to begin Fri., September 18<sup>th</sup>, 9 AM to 12 PM, at the Polk County Health Dept. in Balsam Lake.** Please check your local papers and the Polk County influenza website at [www.polkcountyflu.com](http://www.polkcountyflu.com) for additional dates and times. Residents may also contact their local health care provider for seasonal vaccination schedules.

As always, there are things you and your loved ones can do to protect yourselves from becoming ill. Frequently wash your hands, cover your cough or sneeze, get plenty of rest and drink plenty of fluids, avoid those who are sick, and stay home from work/school if you are ill. In addition to these general precautions, receive your seasonal influenza vaccine early and make a household plan for illnesses which includes alternative childcare, staying home when sick, and ensuring you have enough over the counter cold/flu medications.