

ShowMe Health

Subject: Toll Free H1N1 Info Line

Author: Missouri Dept. of Health & Senior Services

Publication date: November 10th, 2009

New toll-free number to provide H1N1 flu and vaccine information to Missouri residents
Call 1-877-FLU-4141 for around-the-clock assistance

Missouri residents can call a new toll-free number for information about the H1N1 flu, from symptoms and basic medical advice to the availability of the new H1N1 vaccine.

The number, 1-877-FLU-4141 (1-877-358-4141), will be answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Specialists with the H1N1 InfoLine will answer questions about flu symptoms, when to seek medical care and ways to limit the spread of the flu, including the new vaccine. Medical professionals will be available to assist the specialists with callers' questions.

The information line is sponsored by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.

"As we get further into flu season, we know many Missourians will have questions about the H1N1 flu," said Margaret Donnelly, director of the state health department. "We urge Missouri residents to do everything they can to prevent the spread of the flu and keep their families healthy. The Flu InfoLine can help answer questions they might have."

Health care professionals can also call the toll-free number for more information about the H1N1 flu and vaccine.

The state health department is encouraging Missourians to get the vaccine as it becomes available. Pregnant women, children and young adults are the most at risk of contracting the H1N1 flu, so they will be given priority to receive the vaccine first. Studies show that older people are less at risk because they appear to have some degree of resistance to the virus.

Missouri received its first shipment of aerosol mist vaccine early this month. Additional shipments of the aerosol mist and the injectable form of the vaccine began arriving from drug manufacturers this week.

The mist version of the flu vaccine can be used by healthy children and adults ages 2 through 49. Because it contains live virus, it is not appropriate for pregnant women, children under 2 years old or anyone with an underlying health condition such as asthma. Those groups should receive an H1N1 flu shot.

“Adequate supplies of the flu vaccine will be available for the high-risk groups,” Donnelly said. “As additional shipments of the vaccine arrive in Missouri, flu shots or vaccine mist should be available to everyone who wants them.”

H1N1 flu symptoms include fever, cough and sore throat. Most cases are relatively mild to moderate and do not require treatment. Most people with the H1N1 flu can recover at home. They should get plenty of fluids, take over-the-counter medication to reduce their fever and stay home and rest.

Pregnant women and people with underlying health conditions who think they might have the flu should contact their health care provider.

In addition to the vaccine, basic flu prevention practices can help control the spread of the flu:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow, not your bare hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Stay home when you are sick, especially if you have a fever. Remain at home until 24 hours after your fever is gone without the use of fever-reducing medication.

For more information about the flu, go to the state health department’s Web site at www.dhss.mo.gov. To learn more about obtaining the H1N1 flu vaccine, Missourians should call their local health department.

All services of the Livingston County Health Center are provided on a non-discriminatory basis.