

**Thomas Jefferson Health District
2009 H1N1 Influenza Update – 10/23/09**

Influenza activity continues to increase throughout the state and in all age groups.

- This week in Virginia surveillance of patients seeking emergency department and urgent care treatment for suspected influenza reached 14.2%, surpassing the peak of the last two seasonal flu cycles, which was 7%.
- In the U.S., hospitalization rates for laboratory-confirmed influenza are higher than expected for this time of year. According to CDC, laboratory-confirmed influenza hospitalization rates for children 5-17 years old and for adults 18-49 years old exceed average flu season rates.
- The predominant influenza virus circulating is the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus (formerly called swine flu). This influenza virus remains susceptible to antiviral drugs (oseltamivir and zanamivir) with rare exception.
- In contrast to seasonal flu strains, adults older than 64 years have been less affected by the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus thus far.

CDC recommends a three-step approach to fighting the flu: vaccination, everyday preventive actions including frequent hand washing and staying home when sick, and the correct use of antiviral drugs *if* your doctor recommends them.

Production of the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine is underway, and distribution of the vaccine has begun.

- Shipments were expected to flow at consistent levels; however, as a result of manufacturing delays, the amount of 2009 H1N1 vaccine currently available is much less than anticipated. There are and will continue to be delays in vaccine availability.
- The CDC fully anticipates that distribution of vaccine will increase in the upcoming weeks and there will be enough H1N1 vaccine for everyone who wants it.

The Thomas Jefferson Health District (TJHD) received its first large shipment and began its vaccination effort of children on October 15. As of October 23th, clinics will have been completed in 30 schools and 9 Head Start programs throughout the district.

- Due to the production delays, TJHD has not yet received any additional vaccine.
- TJHD wants to make the vaccine available as quickly as possible. We have developed a vaccine clinic schedule to conduct the remaining school-based clinics. We will make a determination three days before each of the scheduled clinic as to whether or not we have enough vaccine on hand to conduct the clinic. If we do not have enough vaccine, we will reschedule the clinic.

- We have learned that delivery of H1N1 vaccine to local physicians' offices was also delayed this week. The Virginia Department of Health will be distributing additional vaccine to healthcare providers as soon as it is available.
- The Thomas Jefferson Health District will also arrange opportunities for pregnant women to receive the vaccine as soon as we receive additional shipments. We are keeping a list of pregnant women who call us seeking vaccine and will contact them as we receive vaccine.

There are two forms of flu vaccine: a shot and a nasal spray.

- One dose of H1N1 flu vaccine is needed for persons ten and older. Two doses are needed for children 9 years old and younger.
- The 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine is made just like seasonal flu vaccines. It is expected to be as safe and effective as seasonal flu vaccines.

Basic measures can help reduce the spread of germs.

- Flu viruses spread from person to person through coughing or sneezing.
- When you are sick with the flu, stay at home or away from others until at least 24 hours after you are free of fever (100° F), or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw your used tissues in the trash can.
- Clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleanser often, especially when sick.

Influenza Illness

Symptoms caused by the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus are similar to other seasonal flu viruses and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headaches, chills, and fatigue. Some people report vomiting and/or diarrhea.

- Most people who get influenza recover without any treatment or special care.
- However, influenza can cause serious illness in some people. Persons at higher risk of complications from influenza viruses include children younger than five years old, pregnant women, people with certain health conditions, and persons older than 65 years.
- Children and adults who develop a fever of at least 100°F and a cough or sore throat should call their doctor, especially if they are at higher risk of complications from influenza.
- Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in the body. The CDC currently recommends that clinicians prioritize use of antivirals for persons at higher risk of complications from influenza.