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Say “Hello” to a Healthy 2010 With a Dose of H1N1 Flu Vaccine

By Dr. Joann Schaefer, Nebraska’s Chief Medical Officer

Thinking about improving your health in 2010? Did you know flu vaccination is a great way to do that? Vaccination helps prevent disease and saves lives.

January 10-16 is National Influenza Vaccination Week, and H1N1 flu vaccine is now available to everyone. I encourage you and your family to get vaccinated.

We can’t predict what the H1N1 virus is going to do next. But what we do know is getting vaccinated now will help stop the spread of the virus in the future.

H1N1 vaccine helps protect you. You aren’t likely to get sick from the virus, and staying healthy means you won’t infect your family members. What about them? They could get H1N1 flu from somewhere else. They may be at risk of complications. So shouldn’t your family get vaccinated too?

H1N1 vaccine is safe and effective. The manufacturing process is the same tried and true process that’s been used to make seasonal flu vaccine for decades. It’s made in the same factories that produce seasonal flu vaccine and has been rigorously tested.

Vaccine is open to everyone, but people in the following high-risk groups also remain a priority: anyone 6 months-24 years old, pregnant women, people who live with or care for babies 6 months old and younger, health care and emergency medical services personnel and people 25-64 years old with underlying medical conditions, like heart disease or asthma.

Remember, it’s a myth that you can get the flu from the shot. The most common reaction is soreness and redness at the injection site. FluMist, the nasal spray, is a great alternative if you don’t like needles, and it’s available for healthy people 2-49 years old. It takes about two weeks before immunity is fully developed.

So step up and get vaccinated against H1N1 flu. You’ll be reaping the benefits for months to come, and your body will thank you.

For more information about H1N1 flu, go to www.dhhs.ne.gov/h1n1flu.