



THE Flu AND YOU

Information for Knox County students and their parents • Vol 1 August 2009

Pandemic means "Pay Attention" *not panic*

For several years we have been talking about the possibility of a pandemic flu outbreak. Pandemic means that an illness has affected a large number of people in several different parts of the world. That is what has happened with the H1N1 virus which has affected more than 177,457 people throughout the world. This fall and continuing into 2010, it will be important to pay attention to news reports and advisories from health and school officials.

Keep in mind that there will be 2 types of flu shots this fall - one for seasonal flu and one for the new H1N1 virus. Dates and times have been set for the seasonal flu clinics provided by the Health Department. The schedule can be found on the *What's New Page* at www.knoxhealth.com

Your good health is in your hands

To protect yourself and those around you, remember to:

- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or elbow. If you cough or sneeze into a tissue, throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

H1N1 expected to return this fall

The H1N1 virus which appeared in the spring, is expected to be back in the fall. While the numbers of those affected in the spring were relatively small, more people are expected to be affected this time.

WHO CAN GET SICK?

Based on those who became sick from the virus in the spring, there are three groups who are expected to be most affected by this second appearance of the virus. The target groups are:

- Students, kindergaren through college
- Pregnant women
- People of any age with chronic illnesses such as asthma, diabetes, heart, lung or kidney disease.

IS THERE A VACCINE FOR H1N1?

A vaccine to protect against the

H1N1 virus is currently being made and is expected to be available late this fall.

When the H1N1 vaccine is available, it will be first made available to the target populations. Direct care healthcare workers will also be getting the vaccine when it is first available since it will be important to keep them healthy so they can give the vaccine and keep others healthy.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS FOR H1N1?

The H1N1 flu has similar symptoms to seasonal flu including fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. A significant number of people who have been infected with this virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting. H1N1 is also characterized by a high fever (100 degrees or higher) and a severe headache.

Vaccine to be given to students

Since students are one of the target groups affected by H1N1, the Knox County Health Department is expecting to give H1N1 vaccine in the form of a shot to local students. Details for the school H1N1 clinics are yet to be finalized, but information such as dates and locations will be made available to parents soon.

PARENTAL PERMISSION NECESSARY

Parents will need to provide permission for their child to receive the H1N1 vaccine. Permission forms will be sent home with students and will need to be signed by parents and returned before a student can receive a shot. No student will receive a shot without parental permission.

WHERE WILL THE SHOTS BE GIVEN?

The H1N1 vaccine clinics for stu-

dents are expected to take place at the schools. Clinics for elementary students are expected to take place afterschool with parents present while clinics for middle school and high schools will be given during the school day.

As with seasonal flu shots and since this is a new vaccine, the H1N1 vaccine will need to be administered in two shots, about a month apart.

WILL SCHOOLS CLOSE ?

It is expected that schools will not close as easily or as long as many did in the spring when a student in a school contracted the H1N1 virus. This time around, every attempt will be made to keep schools open. School officials are developing plans for alternative learning opportunities should schools need to close.