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## Public Information Release

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### MIAMI COUNTY FLU UPDATE

October 19, 2009

Here are some questions and answers concerning seasonal and H1N1 flu in Miami County provided by the Miami County Health District.

Q.: What is the level of H1N1 activity in schools?

A.: In general, schools are reporting slightly higher levels of absenteeism when compared to the same time period last year. At this point in time, it cannot be said with any degree of certainty what is causing the absenteeism. There are anecdotal reports of flu, the common cold, and whatever else happens normally this time of year. Some schools are seeing a spike in absenteeism and then returning to normal within a few days. One school in Piqua showed a 24 hour type spike.

Q.: Is seasonal flu vaccine available?

A.: It appears that most providers (public health clinics and private suppliers) are out of seasonal flu vaccine. It seems that the manufacturers of the seasonal vaccine don't have a shortage of vaccine so much as there is a "phased delivery" issue. Phased delivery means that more vaccine is available for delivery in November and December. Once the supply of vaccine becomes available and the Health District detects that there is still a demand, they will order more and have it available as an option in their H1N1 clinics. Usually, demand for seasonal flu vaccine tapers off to nothing around mid-November. It is important to note that the seasonal flu vaccine is still effective if given anywhere between now and the middle of January. The Health District will keep the public updated on its website [www.miamcountyhealth.net](http://www.miamcountyhealth.net).

Q.: When and where will H1N1 shots be available to the public?

A.: Shipments of vaccines rely on a system created by the Ohio Department of Health. Promises of scheduled shipments of vaccines by the Ohio Department for Health have so far proven to be unreliable. "Our powers of prediction are only accurate when the vaccine arrives at our door," according to James A. Luken, Miami County Health Commissioner. The first groups to receive the vaccine will be pregnant women, health care workers, families of children under the age of six months, and young preschool aged children. These will most likely be given by obstetricians, pediatricians, hospitals and public health. When enough vaccine has been delivered to providers to satisfy this first group and enough accumulated to give to the



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other priority groups (all people up to age 24 and all people age 25 to 64 that are immunocompromised) the health district will open a large clinic at the old Steve and Barry's store at the Piqua Mall.

Q.: With all the uncertainty about when the H1N1 vaccine will be available, what is the best way to stay up-to-date?

A.: The best way to stay up-to-date is to register for a notification of the vaccine. Pre-registration allows you to:

- Greatly reduce the amount of time spent at the facility where you receive your vaccine.
- Improves accuracy.
- Enables you to be notified when your facility has vaccines available.
- Enables you to be notified when to receive your 2nd dose.
- Enables you to retrieve your record on this system.
- Enables public health to plan for how much product is necessary for each facility

To pre-register, go to the health district's website, [www.miamcountyhealth.net](http://www.miamcountyhealth.net) and follow the H1N1 links to the pre-registration icon. Registering does not guarantee a shot; it will notify you when you can get one and help you get out of the clinic quickly.

Q.: How many doses will I need of the H1N1 vaccine?

A.: Those persons age nine years and younger will require two doses spaced roughly four weeks apart. Everybody else will need one dose.

Q.: My doctor did a rapid flu test and said that I had the swine flu. How accurate is that?

A.: The rapid flu test lets you know if you have flu, but it doesn't know which type. Typing is no longer done unless the patient is hospitalized or dies. If you don't fall into either of those categories, previous testing experience tells us that it is probable that you do have H1N1. But it still could be seasonal flu. Same symptoms, same treatment, same outcomes.

Q.: If I've had the flu, doesn't that impart immunity against H1N1? And will I still need an H1N1 shot?

A.: Since no one can be certain, it is still best to get the shot.