

Health Bulletin



What To Do This Flu Season

(NAPSA)—Whether you remember the flu pandemics of 1957 or 1968 or you've only heard the stories, you have probably never seen a flu season quite like the one we're having this year. This year there is a new and very different flu virus on the scene that is causing illness called 2009 H1N1 flu (sometimes called "swine flu").

Many people will not have immunity to this new flu virus and there could be more people sick, hospitalized and dying from flu-related illness this season. While H1N1 flu has been the most common flu virus so far in the 2009-10 season, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) expects that regular seasonal flu viruses will cause illness as well.

To help people stay healthy, CDC recommends a yearly seasonal flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against seasonal influenza. A separate vaccine has been made to protect against H1N1 flu. CDC has recommendations on who should get vaccinated with each vaccine this season, so ask your doctor about flu vaccination.

"Flu is not to be taken lightly. People who do not get the flu vaccine are taking two risks: First, they risk a potentially serious case of the flu. And second, if they get sick, they risk passing it to family, friends and co-workers," says Dr. Anne Schuchat, director of the National Center for Immu-



Doctors say vaccinations are key to guarding against H1N1 flu and seasonal flu.

nization and Respiratory Diseases at the CDC. "The latter can be especially dangerous for people at high risk of serious flu-related complications and death."

The flu can be far worse than the common cold, with symptoms including fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people may also have vomiting and diarrhea. People may be infected with the flu, including H1N1 flu, and have respiratory symptoms without a fever. Dangerous complications of flu can include pneumonia, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma or diabetes.

Doctors say vaccination is a person's best defense against influenza. To learn more about seasonal flu and H1N1 flu, visit www.flu.gov and www.cdc.gov/flu or call CDC at (800) CDC-INFO