

St. Mary's Church

Stewardship of the Body



“I give you thanks that I am fearfully, wonderfully made” (Ps. 139)

SEASONAL FLU

With all the attention on H1N1 Flu, we need to remember that seasonal flu also is a threat. It is estimated that seasonal flu causes approximately 36,000 deaths per year, mostly in people who are older or have underlying medical conditions.

What are the symptoms of seasonal flu? The symptoms of seasonal flu and H1N1 flu are similar: fever, body aches, headache, stuffy/runny nose, cough, fatigue, sometimes nausea and vomiting. One difference that is being seen at this time is that seasonal flu is more severe in older people whereas the H1N1 flu seems to affect younger people more severely. Pregnant women are vulnerable to both types of flu.

How will I know which type of flu I have? You may not know for sure. The only people being tested now for H1N1 flu are those who have to be hospitalized.

What should I do if I get sick? The safest thing to do is to stay home from work, school and church until there is no fever for at least 24 hours, take fever-reducing medications such as Tylenol or ibuprofen (avoid aspirin, especially in children and teenagers), drink plenty of liquids, and rest. If symptoms become more severe or the fever persists more than 2-3 days, see a doctor. Ask for a mask when you go to the clinic or doctor's office to prevent spreading the virus.

What about flu shots? The vaccine for seasonal flu is now available and flu shot clinics are currently scheduled. It is hoped that people will get the seasonal flu shot now so that when the H1N1 vaccine becomes available in October, the seasonal flu vaccinations will be completed.

Who should get flu shots?

For seasonal flu, the following should get the flu shot (1 shot):

- Children aged 6 months to 18 years
- Any adult, but especially those over 50
- Anyone who has chronic pulmonary, heart, kidney, liver, neurological or neuromuscular, hematologic or metabolic (diabetes) disorders.
- Persons who have immunosuppression, caused by drugs, such as steroids or diseases such as HIV
- Residents of nursing homes or other long-term-care facilities
- Household contacts & caregivers of children and infants
- Household contacts & caregivers of persons with medical conditions
- All healthcare personnel

For H1N1 Flu: Since there will be limited quantities of H1N1 vaccine available at first, the Center for Disease Control (CDC's) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has recommended a priority list for the H1N1 vaccinations:

1. Pregnant women
2. Household contacts & caregivers of children younger than 6 months of age
3. Healthcare & emergency medical services personnel
4. All people from 6 month through 24 years of age
5. Persons aged 25 through 64 who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza
6. Once the demand for the prioritized groups has been met, everyone from ages 25 through 64 should receive the vaccine.
7. Current studies indicate that the risk for infection among persons age 65 or older is less than the risk for younger age groups. However, once vaccine demand among younger age groups has been met, the vaccine should be offered to people 65 and older.

Seasonal Flu Vaccine Clinics in the Grand Forks Area:

Altru Health System:

- Family Medicine Center: Walk in Flu Shot Clinic: September 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30, Oct. 1, 2. from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. for people 9 years of age and older. Register at registration desk.
- Family Medicine Residency: Walk in Flu Shot Clinic: September 8, 17th, & 22nd. 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. and 1 to 4:30 p.m. Or call 777-6800 for an appointment.
- Main Clinic – Pediatrics: Walk in Flu Shot Clinic for pediatric patients and their immediate family: dates to be announced. Other times, please call ahead but no appointment is required. Register at the lobby registration desk.

Aurora Medical Center:

- Walk in Flu Shot Clinics every Wednesday from September 9 through October 14 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. No appointment needed.

Meritcare Clinic – East Grand Forks:

- Flu shots available September 15, 22, 25, & 29th from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Appointments are preferred.

Sources: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm, www.altru.org/flu shot finder, telephone calls to Meritcare Clinic and Aurora Medical Center.