



Dear Friends,

Flu season is quickly approaching and due to the novel H1N1 (swine influenza) virus, this year's flu season will be experienced and managed differently than the flu seasons of the past.

There will be two separate influenza vaccines this year - the seasonal influenza vaccine (that we get every year) and the novel H1N1 (swine influenza) vaccine. You will need *both* of the vaccines to be protected from influenza this year. Look for information in your local paper for vaccine dates and times. Remember to take advantage of free clinics in the community and schools.

All of us must prepare for the disruptions the novel H1N1 (swine influenza) virus may have on our daily lives. It is critical to take basic infection control preventive steps very seriously this year. These everyday precautions will help prevent the spread of influenza:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and then throw the tissue away immediately. Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective and are easy to carry in your purse or car.

If you are sick, it does not mean you have the novel H1N1 (swine influenza) virus. Colds, seasonal allergies and seasonal flu will be in the community along with other types of illnesses.

If you have a fever of 100 degrees or higher with chills, body aches, cough, sore throat, trouble breathing, vomiting or diarrhea, please call your doctor or medical provider. Antiviral medications are available and may help you get better sooner if taken early. Should the community experience a large outbreak of influenza, PDH will provide phone guidance on obtaining antivirals.

If you are sick stay home from work or school. It is important to limit contact with other people, so you do not spread germs to others. The CDC recommends people with influenza-like illness should stay home for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).

If you have flu symptoms and need to go to a physician appointment, use a surgical mask, and tissue etiquette, (cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and throw the tissue away afterward. Use alcohol hand gel; wear a surgical mask in the waiting room). Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), Kleenex, mask and alcohol gel will be located at the entrance of each PDH clinic and are available for your use.

The message in brief, eat a well balanced diet, exercise, drink water, **use basic infection control principles and get immunized** to stay healthy during the influenza season.

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