

NEWS RELEASE
November 3, 2009

MASON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
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TO: KMAS, KRXY, SHELTON-MASON COUNTY JOURNAL, THE OLYMPIAN, SHELTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NORTH MASON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CITY OF SHELTON, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, THE SUN

Re: H1N1 Vaccine Update / H1N1 Medical Treatment

Mason County Public Health has issued this release in response to public inquiries regarding the availability of the H1N1 influenza vaccine, and to answer questions about medical treatment for those who are ill with flu. The public is advised that H1N1 flu is currently *widespread* in schools, workplaces, and the community as a whole.

1. When will we get H1N1 vaccine?

Mason County Public Health is working to assure that weekly vaccine shipments get to immunization providers in the community as quickly as possible. Exact amounts of the vaccine and delivery dates are difficult to predict due to vaccine production delays. To date, the amount of vaccine received has been insufficient to meet demand. Limited supplies have been targeted at vaccinating health care and emergency medical workers, pregnant women, young children and care givers of children 6 months or less. We hope eventually to have enough vaccine for anyone who wants it, but it's been a slow process.

2. Should I go to the emergency room if I am sick?

Persons who experience mild, flu-like symptoms are advised to stay home and avoid contact with others.

Persons who are sick with flu symptoms and are at high risk of flu complications or are concerned about their illness should call their health care provider. Typical flu symptoms include fever (100 degrees or more), cough and/or sore throat, and may also include body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue.

The emergency room should be used only for people who are very sick. **If you or the person you are caring for has any of the following symptoms, go to the emergency room.**

In children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting

- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In adults:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

3. Are there medicines to treat the flu?

Antiviral medications to treat H1N1 and seasonal flu are currently available with a doctor's prescription. Most people do not need these drugs to fully recover from the flu, however, persons at higher risk for severe flu complications, or those with severe flu illness who require hospitalization, might benefit from them. Persons in these categories are advised to consult with their health care provider regarding the desirability of receiving antiviral medication. These medications are most effective if started within 48 hours of the first symptoms of illness.

For additional information on H1N1:

- Call the Mason County Public health Flu Line (360) 427-9670 x 599
- Go to the Mason County Web Site www.co.mason.wa.us

Tim Sheldon
Chair

Lynda Ring Erickson
Commissioner

Ross Gallagher
Commissioner