

# **Delaware General Health District**

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# NEWS RELEASE

## **DELAWARE GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT WEEKLY INFLUENZA UPDATE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**DELAWARE, Oh., Jan. 15, 2010** – This is the weekly flu update issued by the Delaware General Health District.

During this National Influenza Vaccination Week, we have some fresh perspective on our progress in the largest mass immunization campaign ever. New statistics recently issued by the Ohio Department of Health show that as of Jan. 8:

- About 19 percent of Delaware General Health District residents have gotten H1N1 immunizations, based on ODH's population estimates. That's very close to the national rate of 20.3 percent reported today by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- About 48 percent of Delaware General Health District residents at high risk have gotten the H1N1 vaccine. That is the third-best rate among all 88 Ohio counties, and higher than all adjoining counties.
- About 45 percent of local children aged 5-18 with medical conditions have gotten the vaccine.
- About 95 percent of local emergency medical technicians and health care workers have gotten the vaccine.
- About 33 percent of local pregnant women have gotten the vaccine.

Our local percentages in those last three categories are all significantly higher than the statewide rates as of the end of 2009, according to information published in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*.

- The campaign has had its greatest local success in immunizing persons who live with or care for infants under 6 months old. According to ODH, our agency has immunized more than 100 percent of its estimated total for that population in our district.
- Young adults ages 19-24 show the lowest local percentage of H1N1 immunizations among the high-risk groups, roughly 10 percent.

Unfortunately, 19-through-24-year-olds are among the most likely to get H1N1 flu. Public Health authorities, mindful that many persons of those ages consider themselves invulnerable, are using social networking programs such as Facebook to urge young adults to become “Flu Fighters” with immunizations and other prevention steps. (See [www.facebook.com/H1N1flu](http://www.facebook.com/H1N1flu).)

The National Influenza Vaccination Week observance emphasizes the need for flu immunizations for people at high risk for flu complications. According to the National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO) and/or the CDC:

- An estimated 229 children under 12, and 75 ages 12-17, have died in the U.S. from H1N1 flu – significantly more flu deaths in those age groups than have been seen in recent years.
- Children with underlying health conditions like asthma, neuro-developmental disorders, or diabetes especially need the H1N1 vaccine.
- Pregnant women who receive flu immunizations protect themselves and their babies. Millions of pregnant women have received seasonal flu immunizations over the years without suffering any harm.
- Persons with chronic medical conditions such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes have suffered more deaths from H1N1 flu than any other population. Despite this, most of them have not yet received H1N1 vaccine.

While high-risk persons are the top priority, everyone really needs to get H1N1 immunizations because everyone is at risk for getting and spreading the disease. Our H1N1 immunization campaign will continue with the goal of protecting everyone.

Here and across the nation, misinformation has kept many people from seeking H1N1 immunizations. The web site [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) attempts to debunk several of the leading H1N1 flu myths, including:

- That the vaccine preservative thimerosal is unsafe. Numerous studies have shown this is untrue. Preservative free H1N1 vaccine is available.
- That the H1N1 vaccine contains adjuvants such as squalene. H1N1 vaccine distributed by the U.S. government does not contain adjuvants.
- That the H1N1 vaccine has not been adequately tested for safety. Clinical trials conducted by the National Institutes of Health and the vaccine manufacturers have shown that the new H1N1 vaccine is both safe and effective. The FDA has licensed it. There have been no safety shortcuts. It is produced exactly the same way the seasonal flu vaccine is produced every year.

**LOCAL H1N1 CLINICS:** To make an appointment for an H1N1 immunization, log on to [www.delawarehealth.org](http://www.delawarehealth.org). Follow the link and instructions to use the online scheduling system. You can sign up your entire family at a time convenient for you. Persons lacking Internet access can schedule appointments by phoning 740-368-1700. Appointments are available:

- At the Delaware Health Center, 801 Ohio Health Boulevard, Delaware, every Tuesday and Thursday from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. except for Jan. 26. There also will be a clinic there on Saturday, Jan. 23, from 9:15 to 11:45 a.m.
- At the Delaware General Health District clinic, 3 W. Winter St., Delaware, on weekdays from 7:45 to 9 a.m.

**LOCAL CASES:** No new confirmed cases of H1N1 flu were reported in the Delaware General Health District over the past week.

**SENTINEL SITES AND OTHER SURVEILLANCE:** The number of people being seen by a healthcare provider due to Influenza Like Illness continues to be higher than normal, but is continuing to decline. Over-the-counter flu treatment sales have returned to normal, according to reports from participating local retailers.