

Delaware General Health District

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NEWS RELEASE

WEEKLY INFLUENZA UPDATE FOR DELAWARE COUNTY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DELAWARE, Oh., Sept. 25, 2009 – Here is the second weekly update on the flu situation in Delaware County. The Delaware General Health District will issue weekly updates to local news media throughout the upcoming flu season.

LOCAL CASES: During the week of Sept. 12-18, there was a small increase in children aged 10-17 visiting doctors because of influenza-like symptoms. One Southern Delaware County school saw a significant jump in absences due to influenza-like illnesses, but the total absent remained under 10 percent.

SCHOOLS: The Health District has supplied local schools with letters to send home with children who are ill. The letters advise parents on various ways to help prevent flu, including keeping ill children home until they have been free of fever for 24 hours.

SENTINEL SITES AND OTHER SURVEILLANCE: Sales of over-the-counter cough and cold medicines, thermometers, and throat lozenges increased over the previous week.

H₁N₁ FLU TESTING PROTOCOL: Concerns have been voiced about limits on H₁N₁ flu testing. Since early August, the Ohio Department of Health laboratory has conducted H₁N₁ tests only when someone with symptoms is hospitalized or is suspected of being part of a cluster of cases. This allows Public Health experts to identify the most severe cases and outbreaks at a time when the disease is widespread. Treatment for a person with flu symptoms is the same for all types of flu, so no test is necessary in most cases.

SEASONAL FLU SHOT CLINICS: The Health District's seasonal flu shot clinics will start on Oct. 14. Almost everyone is recommended to get a seasonal flu shot this year.

H₁N₁ FLU SHOT CLINICS: The Health District will offer H₁N₁ immunizations once vaccine is received later this fall. Pregnant women, children 6 months and older, and young

adults through age 24 lead the priority list for the first doses. Details on how to get the H₁N₁flu shot will be announced later.

SYMPTOMS: The symptoms of the pandemic H₁N₁ virus are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Diarrhea and vomiting have been reported by some people, mostly children.