



## Genesee County Health Department Novel H1N1 Influenza Media Conference – Talking Points

October 23, 2009, 9:00 am

1. **There is a lot of flu activity in Genesee County at this time.**
  - Nearly all of the flu in Genesee County and the rest of the nation at this time is the novel H1N1 strain of flu.
  - Most doctors are not testing for the type of flu their patients have unless there are extreme circumstances such as hospitalization, very unusual symptoms, or death.
  - The novel H1N1 flu strain appears to spreading most rapidly among children at this time.
2. **There are simple things everyone can do to prevent the spread of the flu.**
  - Everyone should wash their hands frequently.
  - Everyone should avoid touching their face, eyes, nose, ears, and mouth.
  - Everyone should cover their coughs and sneezes with a cloth or tissue or cough and sneeze into their sleeve at their elbow.
  - Everyone should stay home and away from others as much as possible when sick.
  - Everyone should get their flu vaccines, both seasonal and novel H1N1 when it is available to them.
  - Parents can help keep flu out of schools and schools stay open by keeping their sick children home from school and also by sending their healthy children to school.
3. **Most healthy people who get the flu, including the novel H1N1 strain of flu, will recover with no complications.**
  - People who are in poor health or who have certain medical conditions are at more risk of serious complications when they get the flu.
  - To avoid spreading the flu to people who are most at risk of complications, people (especially children) who are ill should not visit family and friends in the hospital because they will spread the flu virus to the very people most likely to develop serious health complications from the flu.
4. **If you are sick with flu-like symptoms, STAY HOME.**
  - If people sick with flu-like symptoms would like medical advice, they should call their doctor's office first before visiting it.
  - People with severe or unusual flu symptoms should seek medical care immediately.
5. **There is a safe and FREE vaccine that protects against novel H1N1 flu.**
  - The vaccine is the BEST way to prevent the flu.
  - The vaccine is made in exactly the same way as the seasonal flu vaccine.
  - Had the makers of seasonal flu vaccine been aware of the novel H1N1 flu virus earlier, this year's seasonal flu vaccine would have likely included the novel H1N1 strain. Because the seasonal flu vaccine was already in production in the Spring 2009, a separate vaccine containing only the novel H1N1 flu strain had to be made.
  - The novel H1N1 flu vaccine is being provided free to all Americans.
  - There will be no out of pocket costs for anyone getting the novel H1N1 vaccine at the Genesee County Health Department. Private health care providers may charge a vaccine administration fee but the Health Department is working to cover all administration fees not covered by insurance.
6. **The vaccine is in short supply, so it is available only to priority groups at this time.**

The Health Department, hospitals, and private health care providers in Genesee County have only received their very first shipments of novel H1N1 vaccine. Much more vaccine is in the pipeline and is expected soon. For now only those people most at risk for flu complications are eligible to receive the vaccine. Those priority groups are:

