

Pregnant Women Targeted for H1N1 Vaccine

Iowa Flu Information Hotline: 1-800-447-1985

Three weeks after the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine began arriving in Iowa, the supply continues to be allocated to counties on a staggered basis. Until the vaccine is widely available, vaccination priority groups have been established to target those individuals known to be at highest risk for complications from H1N1. Tama County will continue to have free clinic on a first come service basis as flu vaccine is available. We will continue to require signed authorization forms for high risk categories.

Pregnant women are an important part of this targeted population. All influenza can be dangerous to pregnant women and their babies. The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend seasonal and 2009 H1N1 vaccines for pregnant women. "Compared with people in general who get H1N1, pregnant women with H1N1 flu are more likely to be admitted to hospitals, more likely to have serious illness, and more likely to die from H1N1," said IDPH Medical Director, Dr. Patricia Quinlisk.

Pregnant women should get both the 2009 H1N1 flu shot and the seasonal flu shot. Both these injected vaccines are 'killed' vaccines, so you cannot catch the flu from getting these shots. (The other type of flu vaccine – a nasal spray – is not recommended for pregnant women.) Women can receive flu shots at any stage of pregnancy.

If you are pregnant and have flu symptoms, including fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, or fatigue, call your health care provider right away. If H1N1 is suspected, your health care provider may prescribe antiviral medicine that treats the flu. Being pregnant should not stop women from using antiviral medicines if their doctor decides that they are needed.

Women who are breastfeeding and are sick with the flu should continue to breastfeed. Babies who are breastfed get sick from infections like the flu less often and less severely than babies who are not breastfed. Postpartum women should also contact their health care provider immediately if they have symptoms of the flu.

For updated information on the clinic sites and dates please call the automated phone line at 641-484-3026 or check the web site at www.tamacounty.org.