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CHD BACKS CDC'S RECOMENDATION ON H1N1 VACCINE SAFETY; ENCOURAGES IMMUNIZATION

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The Cincinnati Health Department (CHD) is one of the primary distributors of the H1N1 vaccine in Cincinnati and we are working diligently to immunize as many people as quickly as possible. Our Primary Health Care Centers are open Monday through Thursday evenings from now until Dec. 17 for high priority (Tier One) individuals:

http://cincinnati-oh.gov/health/downloads/health_word38140.doc

As of Nov. 30th, we have vaccinated over 27,000 people in more than 100 sessions throughout the City.

Vaccine is the best defense we have against the flu. The CHD agrees with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and strongly encourages you and your family members to be protected by receiving the H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccines. All forms of the H1N1 vaccine are being produced with the identical process used successfully for years for seasonal flu.

There are a lot of rumors, half truths and conspiracy theories circulating about H1N1 vaccine safety. Our recommendation comes after reviewing the CDC recommendations and analyzing data on the tested vaccine, which says the

vaccine is as safe as a seasonal flu vaccine and is the “best way to prevent influenza infection and its complications.”

We take our role to keep Cincinnati safe seriously. Thus, the CDC, US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), state and local health departments, including the CHD, will continue to monitor the vaccine to ensure its safety by continually reviewing data about the vaccine and investigating claims about vaccine safety. As of Nov. 30, we have not had any reported cases of serious side effects or safety concerns from the vaccine.

The vaccine comes in two forms, a nasal spray and a shot. The nasal spray, is a weakened form of the live virus, and the shot contains inactivated virus. You cannot get the flu from taking the mist or the shot form of the vaccine. Eggs are used to produce the vaccine so those who are allergic to eggs may experience an allergic reaction to the flu vaccines and should consult with a medical professional before receiving the vaccine.

Mild side effects of the nasal mist can include runny nose, headache, sore throat and cough in adults. For children, side effects may include runny nose, wheezing headache, vomiting, muscle aches and fever. There are some mild side effects for the shot form of the vaccine including soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given, low-grade fever, aches and nausea. The effects of the Flu, if contracted, are far more serious and unpleasant.

Some parents have expressed concern over whether thimerosal, a mercury-based preservative that has been used for decades to prevent vaccines against microbial contamination. The CDC, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), and the Institute of Medicine have all reviewed numerous studies on Thimerosal and have found no medical complications related to the preservative.

Another safety concern is Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS), a rare disorder—usually, though not always, found in adults where a person’s immune system damages nerve cells. Several studies on the subject have indicated that there is no relationship between vaccine and the disease. In the US About 3,000 to 6,000 people a year develop GBS, whether or not they are vaccinated.

The vaccine, which has been tested and shown to be safe, is the best way to prevent H1N1. Furthermore, the Federal Trade Commission and the Food and Drug Administration warn people to be wary when purchasing and using products including pills, air filtration devices and cleaning agents that claim to prevent, treat or cure the H1N1 virus.

If you still have questions about vaccine safety, priority groups or vaccine availability give us a call at 513-357-7499 or visit www.cincinnati-oh.gov (click on H1N1 Flu Info in top right corner).