



# Stark County Emergency Healthcare Planning Committee

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Oct. 2, 2009  
Media Contacts listed on page 3

## Stark County Health Officials Plan for Flu Season

(STARK COUNTY, Ohio – Oct. 2, 2009) – The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) expects both 2009 H1N1 flu and seasonal flu to cause illness, hospital stays and potentially death for high-risk patients this season.

Stark County's four hospitals and four health departments are working collaboratively to keep our community healthy. They also have strong collaboration through the Stark County Emergency Healthcare Planning Committee (Stark County EHPC) and participate in many regional and state efforts.

Beginning Mon., Oct. 5, visitation at all Stark County hospitals and their respective facilities will be limited to protect everyone. Those with cold or flu symptoms will not be permitted to visit. Persons under the age of 18 years will also not be permitted to visit because early flu is not always apparent in this age group. Exceptions may be made in special situations. As influenza volume and severity of illnesses increase, the number of visitors per patient may also be limited.

Local health officials would like to stress the importance of vaccination for these groups:

		Seasonal Vaccination	H1N1 Vaccination
Pregnant Women (all trimesters)		X (high-risk group)	X (high-risk group)
Children	6 months to 18 years	X (high-risk group)	X (high-risk group)
Adults	19-24 years old		X
	Adults w/underlying diseases*	X (high-risk group)	X (high-risk group)
	65 years and older	X (high-risk group)	

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<i>(continued)</i>	Seasonal Vaccination	H1N1 Vaccination
Health Care Workers and Emergency Personnel	X	X
Household contacts of (all ages): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children 0-59 months</li> <li>• Those with underlying diseases*</li> </ul>	X	X
People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age		X

\* *underlying diseases: cancer; blood disorders (including sickle cell disease); chronic lung disease [including asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)]; diabetes; heart disease; kidney disorders; liver disorders; neurological disorders (including nervous system, brain or spinal cord); neuromuscular disorders (including muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis), weakened immune systems (including people with AIDS).*

Seasonal flu vaccinations are available from local physician practices; public health departments; Immediate Care facilities for Mercy, Aultman (in North Canton, Massillon and Carrollton) and Family Care NOW (in Louisville). H1N1 Vaccine is currently being produced but is not yet available.

In addition to vaccination, local health officials offer these other important tips:

- To prevent spreading germs, children and adults alike should use proper hand hygiene including hand washing and use of alcohol-based sanitizer frequently.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- When coughing or sneezing, cover the nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve but never your hand. Throw the tissue in the trash after use.
- Learn symptoms detailed below for cold, seasonal flu and H1N1.

<b>Symptoms</b>	<b>Cold</b>	<b>Seasonal Flu</b>	<b>Novel (New) Flu H1N1</b>
Onset	Gradual	Sudden	Sudden
Fever	Rare	Common, high & lasts 3-4 days	Common, high & lasts 3-4 days
Headache	Rare	Common	Common
General Aches, Pains	Slight	Usual, often severe	Usual, often severe
Fatigue, Weakness	Quite mild	Can last up to 2-3 weeks	Can last up to 2-3 weeks
Extreme Exhaustion	Never	Early and common	Early and common
Stuffy Nose	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes
Sneezing	Usual	Sometimes	Sometimes

<i>(continued)</i>	<b>Cold</b>	<b>Seasonal Flu</b>	<b>Novel (New) Flu H1N1</b>
Sore Throat	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes
Chest discomfort, cough	Mild to moderate	Common, can become severe	Common, can become severe
Short of Breath	Rare	Rare	Common
Vomiting	Rare	Rare	Common
Diarrhea	Rare	Rare	Common
Complications	Sinus congestion or earache	Bronchitis, pneumonia, can be life threatening	Pneumonia, and other complications, can be life threatening

- Persons with a flu-like illness should stay at home and away from others until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100° F [37.8° C] or greater when measured orally), or signs of a fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- If you think you are ill, contact your physician immediately for advice. Members of the high-risk flu populations experiencing the below symptoms should go to the emergency room immediately:
  - **In children:** Fast breathing or trouble breathing; Bluish skin color; Not drinking enough fluids; Not waking up or not interacting; Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held; Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough, and fever with a rash
  - **In adults:** Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath; Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen; Sudden dizziness; Confusion, and Severe or persistent vomiting.
- For additional guidance, several local resources are available:
  - Aultman Health Line: 330-363-7600. A registered nurse is available to answer questions 24 hours a day.
  - Canton City Health Department: 330-489-3231
  - Stark County Health Department: 330-493-9928
  - [www.AffinityMedicalCenter.com](http://www.AffinityMedicalCenter.com)

A Stark County-based Web site will soon be available to provide local information about the flu season. For more information online now, visit [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/) or [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov).

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