

## **H1N1 (swine flu) Information for Washington Residents**

### **Local News**

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - H1N1 vaccine remains in short supply in most Washington communities, however, the amount available is growing. The state Department of Health is making it easier for people to find the latest information with a variety of easy access resources.

"We know there's a lot of concern about flu this season, and we want Washington residents to have current, easy-to-find information that will help them protect themselves and their families," said Secretary of Health Mary Selecky. "We've got useful guidance on how to avoid getting sick, and what to do if you get sick. Putting it all online and using social media makes it easy for most people to find quick answers."

Visit the Washington Department of Health Web site at <http://www.doh.wa.gov> for a healthy dose of information.

The Department of Health H1N1 Web site is updated regularly. It features flu prevention information, including guides for businesses and schools, tip for parents and caregivers, and downloadable outreach materials. A telephone information line (1-888-703-4364) offers helpful recorded tips on topics such as the symptoms of H1N1, what to do if you're sick, and steps to take to stay well. Department of Health Twitter followers ([http://twitter.com/WA\\_DeptofHealth](http://twitter.com/WA_DeptofHealth)) get frequent updates to help stay current on fast-changing influenza topics. People can send their questions to [prepare@doh.wa.gov](mailto:prepare@doh.wa.gov)

One of the most common questions is about the availability of H1N1 vaccine. The agency Web site includes a "vaccine locator" map, an interactive county-by-county diagram connecting visitors to vaccine distribution information in their communities. The map is updated with the latest information as the vaccine supply increases.

"We want people to take flu seriously," Selecky said, "and remember that it can be prevented and managed with basic good health manners. Washing your hands, covering your cough and sneeze, and staying home when you're sick are key prevention tactics. And get vaccinated when you can. Vaccination is the best protection against influenza."

Vaccine delivery around the country has been slower than expected and supply remains limited. But H1N1 vaccine is here, and more is being shipped every day. More than 500,000 doses have now come to the state, and federal health leaders say in the weeks ahead everyone who would like to get the vaccine will be able to do so. Priority groups to receive early supplies of the vaccine include pregnant women, parents and caregivers of children under six months, healthcare and emergency service workers, people from six months to 24 years, and adults 25-64 with health conditions that put them at higher risk of flu-related complications.

A public education campaign will be launched by the Department of Health in the coming weeks to inform the public about prevention measures and the information resources available. The campaign will include TV and radio advertisements and direct outreach. It will focus on things people can do to help stop the spread of this new flu, including getting vaccinated, washing their hands more often, covering their cough and sneezes, and staying home when sick.

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