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Authorized Signature

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Topic: Provider Information

Subject: Flu Update

Applies to (check all that apply):
- All DHS employees
- County Mental Health Directors
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Health Services
- Children, Adults and Families
- Seniors and People with Disabilities
- County DD Program Managers
- Other (please specify): Public Health Directors, CDDP Directors

Message: This is the third in the series of Flu Updates SPD Central Office will be distributing to DD 24 Hour Residential Programs, DD Vocational Providers, DD Adult Foster Care, DD Children Foster Care, DD Brokerage Directors, Supported Living, Proctor Providers and SPD Foster Care (Commercial/Relative), Assisted Living/Residential Care and nursing facilities. This information is being shared to those with e-mail addresses and via the Administrator Alert system.

If you have questions, please contact me.

If you have any questions about this information, contact:

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Flu Update #3

This is the third H1N1 novel flu update. The first discussed vaccines; the second, suggestions about staffing absenteeism. If you didn’t see the first two, please read at the Administrator Alerts at this website [http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/spd/provtools/newsletters.shtml#aa](http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/spd/provtools/newsletters.shtml#aa) (you will likely need to copy/paste the address into your web browser.

This update deals with protecting staff and others when someone in your facility/home has the flu. Guidelines from the federal Centers of Disease Control are available at [http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm). Attached is a fact sheet on vaccination.

Basic information
The flu spreads by droplets from the respiratory tract when someone sneezes and coughs. The fairly large droplets travel about 3-6 feet from the infected person. It lasts on surfaces from about 3 hours to possibly as long as 24 hours, depending on the temperature, type of surface, and the humidity. Many people catch the flu by picking it up on their hands and then touching their face. People have to be in very close to a coughing person (within 6 feet) to catch the virus from the air.

Measures to protect others when caring for a person sick with the flu
1. Keep the sick person away from other people as much as possible
   - Ask staff, volunteers, family members, workers, etc. to stay home if they think they may have the flu – a fever with cough, sneezing, etc. People should not return until the fever is gone for a full 24 hours and they are not taking any medications to reduce the fever.
   - If someone has the flu in the home/facility, consider discouraging visitors and others from entering.
   - Try to keep people with the flu separate from those who are not ill. This can include trying to keep a person in their room and moving ill people into one section of the facility/home.
   - If the person with the flu must be in common areas, try to have the person wear a mask.
   - Avoid having a pregnant person take care of someone with the flu.
• If staff move between people who are ill and those who are not, make sure that the staff have adequately washed their hands and removed any gloves or masks that they were using before dealing with a healthy person.

2. Working directly with the ill person
• If possible try to stay 3 feet from the person.
• When staff need to be closer, protect eyes, mouth and nose from contamination. Masks and eye protection are effective. Simply turning your face from the person can help.
• Masks and gloves should only be used once and properly discarded. Wash hands immediately after they are removed.
• Avoid touching your face and eyes.
• When finished, wash hands thoroughly. Hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol will also work.

3. Cleanse and disinfect
• Clean surfaces regularly of visible dirt with ordinary soaps or detergents and any common disinfectant.
• For surfaces that are touched frequently (door knobs, TV controls, refrigerator doors, phones, etc.), clean often with a disinfectant or a disinfectant wipe.
• Wash laundry in the regular way but try not to “fluff” or shake dirty laundry and wash hands after handling dirty laundry.
• Keep personal items (toothbrushes, bathroom cups, etc.) separate so there is no contamination from others.
• Wash your hands often and scrub well and long enough. (One way to make sure of this is to sing “Happy Birthday” twice through while washing.) Alcohol-based hand gels do work.

4. Other guidance
• Ask a health care provider if household contacts of the sick person – particularly those who are younger than 5 years old, who may have chronic conditions or who are pregnant – should take antiviral medications.
• If the ill person does not need immediate medical attention but you need medical advice about him or her, contact his or her physician or health care provider.
• If you believe the person needs immediate medical attention, call 911.
Introduction
The best way to prevent influenza is vaccination. It’s important to get a seasonal flu shot or nasal-spray vaccine as soon as they become available in the fall. The 2009 flu season is different because there is a separate vaccine for pandemic H1N1 flu. It requires two additional flu shots—a vaccination and a booster about a month later. Both the seasonal and initial pandemic H1N1 shots can be taken on the same day, but the seasonal shot will probably be available sooner. It’s best to get each shot as soon as it becomes available, especially if you are in one of the groups at high risk of complications from influenza.

Seasonal flu vaccines:
- The seasonal (or common) flu is a respiratory illness that can be transmitted person to person. Most people have some immunity. There are two types of seasonal flu vaccines:
  - A “flu shot” given with a needle, usually in the arm.
  - A nasal-spray flu vaccine.
- Each vaccine contains three influenza viruses. The viruses in the vaccine change each year based on scientists’ estimations about which types and strains of viruses will circulate in a given year.
- About two weeks after vaccination, the body develops antibodies that provide protection against influenza virus infection.
- Everyone should get a seasonal flu shot, especially these priority groups:
  - Children aged six months to 19 years
  - Pregnant women
  - People age 50 and older
  - People with chronic medical conditions
  - Health care workers.

Pandemic H1N1 flu vaccines:
- Pandemic H1N1 is a new flu virus causing illness in people around the world.
- The seasonal flu shot will NOT protect you against pandemic H1N1 flu.
- The pandemic H1N1 flu vaccine will be given only as a shot, with an additional booster needed about four weeks later.
- There are certain priority groups that will receive the vaccine as soon as it becomes available:
  - All those aged six months to 24 years
  - Pregnant women
  - People caring for or living with infants under 6 months of age
  - People aged 25-64 with underlying medical conditions (such as asthma, immune deficiencies, etc.)
  - Health care workers and emergency medical responders.
Who should not be vaccinated?

- There are some people who should not be vaccinated without first consulting a physician. These include:
  - People who have severe allergy to chicken eggs
  - People who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination.
  - People who developed Guillain-Barré syndrome within six weeks of getting an influenza vaccine
  - Children less than six months of age (influenza vaccine is not approved for this age group)
  - People who have a moderate to severe illness with a fever (they should wait until they recover to get vaccinated).

Vaccine effectiveness

- It is still possible, though much less likely, to get the flu even if you've been vaccinated.
- The ability of flu vaccine to protect a person depends on the age and health of the person getting the vaccine, and the similarity or “match” between the virus strains in the vaccine and those in circulation. Testing has shown that both the flu shot and the nasal-spray vaccine are effective at preventing the flu.
- Seasonal flu vaccine protects against serious illness from flu, even if it doesn’t prevent infection completely.

Vaccine side effects

- The seasonal flu shot and nasal spray have different side effects.
- The season flu shot (as well as the H1N1 flu shot, in early testing) has minor side effects that begin soon after the shot and last one to two days, such as:
  - Redness or swelling where the shot was given
  - Low-grade fever, aches and soreness.
  - The seasonal flu nasal-spray vaccine may cause such minor side effects as:
    - In children: runny nose, wheezing, headache, vomiting, muscle aches and fever
    - In adults: runny nose, sore throat and cough.

How can I find a seasonal flu shot this year?

- Both SafeNet www.oregonsafenet.org and the American Lung Association (ALA) www.flucliniclocator.org can help you find the location of seasonal flu shot clinics.

For more information

Oregon Public Health Division
www.flu.oregon.gov

Oregon Public Health Hotline
1-800-978-3040

Oregon county health departments
www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/lhd/lhd.shtml

Federal pandemic H1N1 flu information
www.flu.gov

World Health Organization:
www.who.int

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