



Press Release

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Columbia County To Receive Shipment of H1N1 Vaccine in the First Week of October

Columbia County will be receiving the first shipment of H1N1 vaccine the first week of October according to Anne Parrott the Public Health Preparedness coordinator. The first shipment will be 400 doses of the H1N1 nasal spray (also known as Flumist). The nasal spray is not recommended for all priority groups. It is intended for healthy person's age 2-49 years old that are not in contact with anyone with compromised immune systems. These doses will be distributed to medical clinics in the county which will focus on vaccinating those individuals who are in the Priority Populations designated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Those clinics are Legacy clinic in St. Helens, Providence clinic in Vernonia, and the Office of Integrative Medicine in St. Helens. The OHSU clinic in Scappoose and Columbia Health District Public Health will begin receiving the vaccine by mid-October. The following phases of the distribution will include both injectable vaccine and the Flumist. Columbia County expects to receive larger shipments of the vaccine by the end of October. Once these shipments begin to arrive, public clinics will be offered throughout the county.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) met July 29, 2009 to make recommendations for use of vaccine against novel influenza A (H1N1) which identify the groups in our communities who should be prioritized if the initial vaccine availability is extremely limited. The key populations include those who are at higher risk of disease or complications, those who are likely to come in contact with novel H1N1, and those who could infect young infants. When vaccine is first available, the committee recommended that providers try to vaccinate:

- *Pregnant women,
- *People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age,
- *Health care and emergency medical services personnel with direct patient contact,
- *Persons between the ages of 6 months through 24 years of age, and
- *People from ages 25 through 64 years who are at higher risk for novel H1N1 because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems

Current studies indicate the risk for infection among persons age 65 or older is less than the risk for younger age groups. Therefore, as vaccine supply and demand for vaccine among younger age groups is being met, programs and providers should offer vaccination to people over the age of 65.

The committee also stressed that people over the age of 65 receive the seasonal vaccine as soon as it is available. The novel H1N1 vaccine is not intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccine. It is intended to be used alongside seasonal flu vaccine to protect people.