

*The ISDH sent out this release statewide to the media this afternoon. Updates on H1N1 are available online at: [www.in.gov/flu](http://www.in.gov/flu). Also, please be sure to sign up to be a follower of the state public safety site to get "tweets" on the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine.*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT: Jennifer Dunlap**

**September 15, 2009**

**(317) 233-7315**

**STATE HEALTH COMMISSIONER SAYS  
INFLUENZA VACCINES ARE SAFE AND EFFECTIVE**

INDIANAPOLIS---State Health Commissioner Judy Monroe, M.D. is urging Hoosiers to get the seasonal influenza (flu) vaccine now and to plan to get the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine when it is offered in Indiana.

"Flu vaccine is safe and effective, and prevents thousands of hospitalizations and deaths every year," said Dr. Monroe. "Influenza vaccines have been used for more than 60 years and have an established record of safety in all age groups."

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the 2009 H1N1 influenza A vaccines approved today underwent the same rigorous FDA manufacturing oversight, product quality testing, and lot release procedures that apply to seasonal influenza vaccines.

"Now is the time to get a seasonal flu vaccine and to talk with your doctor about getting the 2009 H1N1 Influenza A vaccine when supplies are available," said Dr. Monroe.

Because different flu virus strains circulate every year, it is necessary to develop and distribute a "new" seasonal flu vaccine annually. Dr. Monroe says the lack of immunity to this flu strain in the general public due to it being novel made it necessary to develop a separate vaccine just for the 2009 H1N1 Influenza A strain.

"Eventually, there should be enough vaccine available for all adults to get vaccinated against 2009 H1N1 flu, but when it first becomes available this fall, we are encouraging certain high-risk groups to get the vaccine first," said Dr. Monroe.

Dr. Monroe says these targeted high-risk groups include the following:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children 0-6 months
- All people 6 months to 24 yrs
- Health care workers and emergency medical services personnel
- People 25-64 with health conditions that make them have a higher risk of medical complications from influenza.

These at-risk groups are also encouraged to get the seasonal flu vaccine as soon as it is offered to them locally and not to wait until the 2009 H1N1 Influenza A vaccine is available. In addition, although they are not a high-risk group for 2009 H1N1, people over the age of 65 should be sure to get the seasonal flu vaccine.

Local health departments will determine how to deliver 2009 H1N1 Influenza A vaccinations to the target groups and community at large, using guidance from the

Indiana State Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Dr. Monroe reminds the public of the following key facts about ALL flu vaccine:

- Flu vaccine does not contain whole flu virus, and cannot cause the flu. Flu vaccine is safe and effective, and prevents thousands of hospitalizations and deaths every year
- Flu vaccination is always voluntary. The seasonal flu vaccine and the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine will both be offered as an option for the prevention of influenza.
- Children are NEVER vaccinated against flu or any other disease without the consent of their parent or legal guardian.

To learn more about the 2009 H1N1 Influenza A, visit [www.in.gov/flu](http://www.in.gov/flu). To receive “tweets” about the 2009 H1N1 Flu vaccine, become a follower of the state public safety Twitter site at: <http://twitter.com/inpublicsafety>.

###

Jennifer Dunlap, Director  
Office of Public Affairs  
Indiana State Department of Health  
(317) 233-7315  
[www.statehealth.IN.gov](http://www.statehealth.IN.gov)

*Supporting Indiana's economic prosperity and quality of life by promoting, protecting, and providing for the health of Hoosiers in their communities.*