

WINDOW OF HEALTH



Seasonal Influenza X H1N1 Influenza = Be Prepared

Each fall officially starts the "flu season." This year is different in that instead of just being concerned about seasonal flu, we must also be prepared for the new novel strain of H1N1 influenza, commonly called the Swine Flu.

The H1N1 flu virus first appeared in the spring. What we knew about H1N1 at the time appeared in the Window of Health, July through September edition. The H1N1 spent the summer in the Southern Hemisphere and now is back (it never did completely go away in the Northern Hemisphere) and we now know that we do not expect it to be the mass killer we had feared, but it is still a force to be reckoned with and we cannot treat it as just another flu strain.

It is not the severity of H1N1 that has Public Health Officials concerned. At present, the severity of H1N1 infection is similar to seasonal flu; however, please keep in mind that some 36,000 people die yearly in the United States from seasonal flu and related complications. One change from the spring is that schools will not close when a single case of H1N1 is suspected, but may close if widespread absenteeism is observed due

to H1N1.

What makes H1N1 different from normal seasonal flu is the demographic groups it affects most. Seasonal influenza normally affects the elderly the most, but H1N1 has its greatest impact on the very young. Pregnant women may be adversely affected by both as they are more likely to get sick than others and have more serious problems with seasonal or H1N1 flu than otherwise normal individuals.

Standard precautions should be taken to avoid either flu—wash hands frequently, avoid coughing or sneezing around others and stay home from work or school if you are sick and stay home until your fever has gone for 24 hours. The best defense this year is to get two different flu vaccinations. One vaccination will be needed for seasonal flu and one (or two if a booster is required) for H1N1.

The seasonal flu vaccine is now available. As usual, the targeted recipients are people older than 50, nursing home residents, health care workers, and chronically ill. The H1N1 vaccine will be available sometime in October. The targeted recipients of H1N1 vaccine are pregnant women, people who live with

or care for children younger than 6 months of age, health care and emergency medical services personnel, persons between the ages of 6 months through 24 years of age, and people ages 25 through 64 who are at a higher risk of novel H1N1 because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems.

The following are common questions concerning the H1N1 virus and seasonal flu:

1. *What should I do if I get sick with flu like symptoms?* If you live in an area where people have been identified with new H1N1 flu and have flu-like symptoms, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people, except to seek medical care if needed.
2. *What if I get this new virus and I am pregnant?* We do know that pregnant women are more likely than others to get sick and have more problems with seasonal flu; we do not know if this is true for H1N1, but it should be taken very seriously.
3. *What is the best way to practice good hand cleaning?* Acceptable methods are: a. washing

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your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or b. using an alcohol based hand cleaner containing at least 60% alcohol.

4. *How should linens, eating utensils and dishes of persons infected with influenza virus be handled?* Linens, eating utensils, and dishes belong to those who are sick do not need to be cleaned separately, but these items must not be shared without washing thoroughly first.
5. *Can the virus live on surfaces, such as computer keyboards?* Yes, flu viruses may be spread when a person touches droplets left by coughs and sneezes on hard surfaces and then touches his or her mouth or nose.

The Twelve Ways To A Healthy Holiday

1. The first way to health, said the Monroe County Health Department to me wash hands to be safe and healthy.
2. The second way to health, said the Monroe County Health Department to me bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.
3. The third way to health, said the Monroe County Health Department to me manage stress, bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.
4. The fourth way to health, said the Monroe County Health Department to me don't drink and drive, manage stress, bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.
5. The fifth way to health, said the Monroe County Health Department to me be smoke free, don't drink and drive, manage stress, bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.
6. The sixth way to health, said the Monroe County Health Department to me fasten belts while driving, be smoke-free, don't drink and drive, manage stress, bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.
7. The seventh way to health, said the Monroe County Health Department to me get exams and screenings, fasten belts while driving, be smoke-free, don't drink and drive, manage stress, bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.
8. The eighth way to health, said the Monroe County Health Department to me get your vaccinations, get exams and screenings, fasten belts while driving, BE SMOKE-FREE, don't drink and drive, manage stress, bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.
9. The ninth way to health, said the Monroe County Health Department to me monitor the children, get your vaccinations, get exams and screenings, fasten belts while driving, BE SMOKE-FREE, don't drink and drive, manage stress, bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.
10. The tenth way to health, said the Monroe County Health Department to me practice fire safety, monitor the children, get your vaccinations, get exams and screenings, fasten belts while driving, BE SMOKE-FREE, don't drink and drive, manage stress, bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.
11. The eleventh way to health, said the Monroe County Health Department to me prepare dinner safely, practice fire safety, monitor the children, get your vaccinations, get exams and screenings, fasten belts while driving, BE SMOKE-FREE, don't drink and drive, manage stress, bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.
12. The twelfth way to health, said the Monroe County Health Department to me eat well and get moving, prepare dinner safely, practice fire safety, monitor the children, get your vaccinations, get exams and screenings, fasten belts while driving, BE SMOKE-FREE, don't drink and drive, manage stress, bundle up for warmth, and wash hands to be safe and healthy.

MCHD School Nurses Bravely Battle The Elements, Attend Training



MCHD School Nurses Connie Carter, RN and Chasity Wilson, RN attended Well Child Pediatric Assessment Training at The University of Louisville on the day of the flood in that city. The training centered on identifying risk factors for health safety, physical and social development in children.



The colorful bulletin board above was constructed at Tompkinsville Elementary School by Brenda Spear and school nurse Christy Grider, RN. The theme of the bulletin board of Falling Into Good Health suggest different ways for students to stay healthy.

“For Grandparents: First In Line For Seasonal Flu Vaccine, Back of The Line For H1N1 Vaccine.”

William Hacker, MD

New MCHD Employee

Nursing Students Visit MCHD



The Monroe County Health Department is proud to welcome Amanda Isenberg, RN to the staff. Amanda will be working as school nurse at Monroe County Middle School. Amanda is a life long resident of Monroe County and a graduate of Monroe County High School and Western Kentucky University Nursing Program. She is married to Neal Isenberg and they have two children, Trey, 12 and Trevor, 7.

Amanda Isenberg, RN

During the months of August-November, students from Bowling Green Technical College have been completing rotations at the health department. A total of 39 students have rotated through the health department and school site clinics. Two of the students pictured are Ashley Biggerstaff (L) and Tara Emmert.



More Evidence Aspirin Protects Against Breast Cancer

Regular aspirin use appears to reduce the risk of breast cancer, according to a new study, but the drug only seems to protect against tumors that are hormonally sensitive.

The report, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, is not the first to suggest aspirin can help prevent breast cancer. But it is the first to find a difference in protection according to tumor type.

The study suggest that aspirin spurs a process that decreases the production of aromatase, which in turn suppresses the production of estrogen, the female hormone that can fuel the growth of

breast cancer.

The study found that women who used aspirin daily reduced their risk of breast cancer by nearly 30%. But when the researchers looked at what types of tumors were affected, aspirin only seemed to protect against tumors that expressed the hormones estrogen or progesterin (or both). These types of tumors tend to have a better prognosis than hormone-receptor negative tumors because they respond to hormonal treatments like tamoxifen.

Ibuprofen, which belongs to a class of drugs similar to aspirin called non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs

(NSAIDs), had only a very weak effect on breast cancer risk. That may be because fewer women in the study used ibuprofen compared to aspirin, so any effect was not noticeable.

Acetaminophen, which is not an NSAID, did not have any appreciable effect on breast cancer risk. That was expected because acetaminophen relieves pain differently than either aspirin or ibuprofen, in a way that does not ultimately affect estrogen. That fact adds weight to the theory aspirin acts against breast cancer by suppressing estrogen.

American Cancer Society

Pneumococcal Disease And The Flu

An estimated 40,000 cases of pneumococcal disease occur each year. Often a secondary complication of the flu, pneumococcal pneumonia also results in an estimated 175,000 hospitalizations annually. Vaccination is a key component in the prevention of pneumococcal disease.

Who needs to be vaccinated?

- Adults 65 years and older
- All adults who smoke cigarettes
- Persons age 2-64 years who have certain chronic medical conditions (such as diabetes heart disease, lung disease including asthma, alcoholism liver disease, kidney failure, HIV infection, or certain types of cancer and immunocompromised persons for example).

Who needs a second dose of vaccine?

A one-time revaccination is indicated for:

- All adults 65 years and older who were previously vaccinated prior to age 65 years if 5 years (or more) have elapsed since the previous dose

- All children and adults who are at highest risk of serious pneumococcal disease such as immunocompromised persons, if 5 years (or more) have elapsed since the previous dose.

For more information, call the Monroe County Health Department.

What Do A **Life Preserver** & A **Flu Shot** Have In **Common?**
 If You Have **Diabetes** Call
Monroe County Health Department
487-6782

CDC
 United Grafix

What's In Your Medicine Cabinet?

Monroe County Health
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452 E. 4th Street
P.O. Box 247
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Published Quarterly By The
Monroe County Health
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Now is a great time to see if any of your medicines should be discarded because they are too old or no longer needed. On prescription bottles, the label will often tell you when the medicine should be discarded. On over-the-counter medicines and sample medicines, the expiration date is often printed on the label under "EXP" or stamped onto the bottom of a bottle, carton, or the crimp of a tube.

The American Pharmacists Association (AphA) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service suggest the following three steps to properly dispose of medicine:

1. **DO NOT FLUSH** unused medications. Recent environmental impact studies report that flushing medicines may have an adverse impact on the environment. However, there are some medicines that the FDA recommends flushing due to abuse potential.
2. When tossing unused medications, protect children and pets from potentially negative side effects. APhA recommends that: a.) Crush solid

medications or dissolve them in water and mix with any material that absorbs the dissolved medication and makes it less appealing for pets or children to eat, then place in a sealed plastic bag **BEFORE** tossing in the trash, b.) Remove and destroy ALL identifying personal information from the medication container, c.) check for approved state and local collection programs or with area hazardous waste facilities.

3. Talk to your pharmacist. Research shows that pharmacists are one of the most accessible healthcare professionals. As the medication experts on the healthcare team, pharmacists are available to guide you on how to properly dispose of your unused medications.

Following these simple steps can help protect your family and community, minimize a potential negative impact on the environment, and prevent the illegal diversion of unused medications.

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