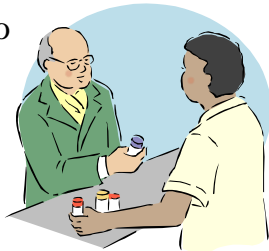


Protecting Families from the Flu

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As children returned to school, there is increased concern that the flu season may be particularly bad this year. Of special concern is the H1N1 flu (called swine flu) which spread throughout many countries and the USA in the spring. To protect our vulnerable family members, young children and older adults, special preventive measures are recommended. First, let's look at H1N1 flu to understand why the heightened concern.



Swine flu is spread like other seasonal flu; when a sick person coughs or sneezes, they send contaminated respiratory droplets into the air where another person may inhale them. Sometimes people may become infected by touching a contaminated surface or object and then touch their own eyes, nose or mouth. They may develop flu symptoms like fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, runny or stuffy nose and fatigue. These symptoms can advance to severe illness (pneumonia and respiratory failure) and death can result.

Efforts are underway to develop a vaccine specifically for H1N1 flu and clinical trials will begin shortly with the hope of having a vaccine

available by October. If safe for children, widespread vaccination may follow.

But it is also expected that seasonal flu, which we do have vaccine for, will also surface and increase a child's vulnerability to the H1N1 strain. So, the Center for Disease Control is now recommending that all children aged 6 months to 18 years get the annual vaccine for seasonal flu. In the past, CDC encouraged annual vaccination, but has increased their recommendation because of the vulnerability of young children and the potential severity of H1N1.

In addition to vaccination, common sense, proven disease prevention habits can help protect your family. These include: *frequent hand washing with soap and water, *keeping a distance of at least 6 feet from people who are sick, and *avoid touching your own eyes, mouth or nose.



Source: Swine Flu Fact Sheet (FS1043) CDC 'FluView' July 25, 2009.



Creative Living is written by University of Missouri Extension Regional Specialists for seniors in English and Spanish. This newsletter is a partnership among the Guadalupe Center, Alzheimer's Association, and University of Missouri Extension. If you have any suggestions for its content, please contact Nina Chen, Ph.D., Human Development Specialist, 816-252-5051.

****Spanish translation provided by Kelly Loeb through Support of Alzheimer's Association.***