

Public Health center on community's health

by Elizabeth Kizer, Public Health Director

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The Apache County Health Department closely monitors the events related to the H1N1 influenza in our county. We are working with Arizona Department of Health Services and federal partners to provide up-to-date information on the progression of the seasonal and H1N1 strains of the flu.

As we prepare for the upcoming flu season and the potential of a widespread H1N1 flu pandemic, it is the recommendation of Apache County Public Health and our partners that all eligible residents of Apache County receive the seasonal flu vaccine as soon as possible.

The Apache County Public Health Department will be offering seasonal flu vaccines beginning on Sept. 12.

Every year in the Arizona, on average:

- * 5 percent to 20 percent of the population gets the seasonal flu;
- * More than 4,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications, and;
- * About 700 people die from seasonal flu.

Some people, such as older people, young children and people with certain health conditions, are at high risk for serious flu complications.

The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccination each fall. There are two types of vaccines:

* The "flu shot" - an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle. The flu shot is approved for use in people 6 months of age and older, including healthy people and people with chronic medical conditions.

* The nasal-spray flu vaccine - a vaccine made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu (sometimes called LAIV for "Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine"). LAIV is approved for use in healthy people from 2 years to 49 years of age who are not pregnant.

About two weeks after vaccination, antibodies develop that protect against influenza virus infection. Flu vaccines will not protect against flu-like illnesses caused by non-influenza viruses. Apache County will be holding our general public seasonal flu vaccine clinics at the following locations during the month of September

- Saturday, Sept. 12, 9 a.m.-noon, St. John's Health Clinic, 1200 W. Cleveland, Suite 9
- Saturday, Sept. 19, 9 am-4 p.m., Round Valley Health Office , 323 S. Mountain Road
- Tuesdays-Thursdays starting Sept. 22, 9 a.m.-noon and 1 p.m.-4 p.m., Round Valley Health Office
- Wednesdays starting Sept. 23, 1 p.m.-5 p.m., St. John's Health Clinic

Please join us and get your seasonal flu vaccine at one of these clinics; bring your insurance card with you. Cost for seasonal vaccine for uninsured patients is \$25.

For the most updated information on locations of clinics, log on to 593info.org or visit www.co.apache.az.us and look for the seasonal flu clinic link.

If you have questions, please contact us at (928) 333-2415.