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Have You Gotten Your H1N1 Vaccine Yet?
It’s not too late; National Influenza Vaccination Week is January 10-16

LOS ANGELES – Sunday, January 10, marks the beginning of National Influenza Vaccination Week. This is a great time to remind residents who have not yet received vaccine against H1N1 flu to make time to get either the flu shot or the nasal spray vaccine. Flu season does not end with the holidays, but continues through the winter and spring months.

“Increased supplies of H1N1 flu vaccine in LA County have allowed us to make the vaccines available to almost everyone over the age of six months. Residents who may have held off on receiving vaccine, either because it was not available or because they were not in a priority group, should take the time now to protect themselves from influenza,” said Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health and Health Officer.

Flu is unpredictable. While current levels of flu activity in LA County appear to be normal for this time of year, there is always the possibility that a third wave of H1N1 flu might strike, or that seasonal flu cases may increase. “Influenza remains active in LA County and most people are still susceptible to becoming ill. Flu season typically lasts until May. In fact, the H1N1 virus was not detected in the U.S. until late April of last year, which means that another increase in flu activity is certainly possible,” said Dr. Fielding.

H1N1 vaccine is available through private doctors, community clinics, and some retail pharmacies. A limited number of appointments for no-cost H1N1 vaccine will be available at certain LA County Public health centers for residents who do not have health insurance or a regular source of health care. For locations and contact information for these health centers, visit the LA County Department of Public Health website at http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov or call the LA County Information Line at 2-1-1.

Certain individuals are at greater risk for complications from H1N1 flu infection. It is particularly important that these individuals get vaccinated if they have not done so already:

- Pregnant women
- People living with or caring for infants under six months of age
- Emergency medical services personnel and health care workers
- Children and young adults from six months to 24 years of age
- People aged 25 to 64 years with chronic medical conditions such as heart or lung disease, asthma, diabetes, or weakened immune systems.

While vaccination remains the most effective tool to prevent the spread of flu, there are also simple, everyday steps that should be taken to stop the spread of illness. These include:
• Washing your hands often, particularly after using the restroom and before and after eating.
• Not touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
• Avoiding close contact with sick individuals.
• Staying home from work, school, or group activities (such as going to the movies or shopping at the mall) when you are sick.

National Influenza Vaccination Week is a national observance that was established to highlight the importance of continuing influenza vaccination. It is also a reminder that the “flu vaccine season” lasts well into spring. For more information on National Influenza Vaccination Week, please visit http://www.flu.gov.

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises more than 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding $750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do, please visit http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov, visit our YouTube channel at http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth, or follow us on Twitter: @LAPublicHealth.

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