

'Tis the Season: for Flu

Traditional and H1N1

With all the attention that H1N1 is getting, it's easy to forget that traditional flu season has arrived. Outbreaks can occur as early as October and peak during the winter months. In the United States, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized and 36,000 die every year because of flu-related complications.

Seasonal flu and H1N1 appear to spread in the same way: from person to person through coughing or sneezing. Therefore, follow these precautions to avoid both:

- Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw the tissue away.
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- To prevent the spread of germs, do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid sick people as much as possible.
- Stay home if you get sick.

BCBSKS members with immunization benefits will be fully covered for the allowed amount of the H1N1 immunization.

The vaccine will be made available to individuals in the following federally-identified priority groups. These groups were identified based on who was most at risk for severe illness from the H1N1 virus:

- Pregnant women
- Household contacts and caregivers of infants younger than six months of age
- All children and young adults ages six months through 24 years
- Health care personnel
- People aged 25-64 years with high-risk medical conditions

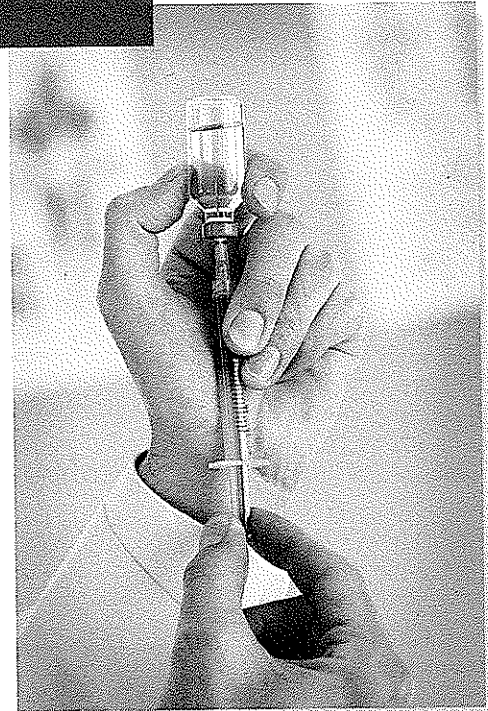
Initially, the first doses of the vaccine arrived in Kansas at a slow pace in early October. Officials believe it will be several more months before there will be enough to provide to everyone wanting protection. Since April, Kansas has confirmed the virus in 55 of the state's 105 counties.

In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough



Wichita and Hutchinson have new group consultants

Janet McMurray and Lori Oleson have been announced as the new group consultants in the Hutchinson and Wichita areas, respectively.

McMurray, who has been with BCBSKS for more than nine years, will be serving businesses in the following counties: Barber, Comanche, Edwards, Harper, Kingman, Kiowa, Pawnee, Pratt, Reno, Rice and Stafford. McMurray is a lifelong resident of Kansas



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