



October 28, 2009

A note from Dr. David Brooks  
Medical Director, Infectious Disease  
ThedaCare

We are in the midst of influenza season; H1N1 is causing many infections and spreading quickly. Since we do not recommend testing to identify H1N1 specifically, we will not know when seasonal influenza comes into the community.

The best protection against influenza is vaccination. This is the first line of defense; the use of masks, gloves and hand hygiene cannot prevent influenza as effectively as being vaccinated.

We have some of our seasonal influenza vaccine supply and I highly encourage every person who works in health care to get vaccinated. The vaccine is safe – you cannot get influenza from the vaccine and the most common side effects are a sore arm and possibly a slight fever. These are small inconveniences compared to the high fever, fatigue, sore throat and muscle aches you'll get from influenza. Historically, our vaccination rates for healthcare workers are too low and puts our patients at risk.

As I mentioned earlier, H1N1 is spreading rapidly in the community – 99% of the influenza testing being done is positive for H1N1. Our best defense to stop H1N1 is to have large numbers of people vaccinated, which will prevent infection and spread.

As of today, we have received a limited supply of the nasal spray H1N1 vaccine. We have distributed what we have for employees to the ICUs, the ED s, radiology and respiratory care departments. As we receive more nasal spray or the injectable H1N1 vaccine, we will we will make the vaccine available to more staff. Again, I would like to assure you the vaccine is safe. It is manufactured using the same process as the seasonal vaccine, which has been proven to be safe through millions of doses administered.

The live attenuated nasal vaccine is safe and only restricted for staff working on bone marrow or organ transplant units. Therefore, all healthcare workers at ThedaCare are candidates for the nasal vaccine and should receive it without delay. There is no data that shows there is spread of either H1N1, or seasonal influenza, from people who receive nasal vaccine to family members, including young children. (Also refer to the CDC website [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu) for additional information)

**The H1N1 outbreak can be stopped and seasonal influenza can be contained if everyone does their part by being vaccinated.**

Thank you.

P.S. Contrary to rumors, I have received my seasonal influenza vaccine and I'll getting H1N1 vaccine next week.