



CHCHD News

Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department

<http://health.hamiltontn.org>

*For more information, contact:
Jennifer Yim, PIO
(423) 209-8238, 315-3987
JenniferY@hamiltonTN.gov*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 16, 2009

Health Department Opens Flu Hotline to Answer Questions

Chattanooga, TN- The Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department has established an Influenza Public Information Hotline. Residents who have questions about vaccine, illness symptoms, medical care, prevention measures, or other issues related to both seasonal influenza or H1N1 influenza, can call 209-8393 between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. daily beginning today. The hotline is not currently taking appointments for flu vaccination nor is vaccine available for H1N1.

New to the hotline this year is a system which assists the caller with call routing. "With the emergence of the H1N1 virus, we are experiencing an increase in requests for information on the influenza virus," said Tammy Burke, Director of Clinical Services at the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department. "And, because flu activity is expected to increase over the coming months, the Health Department is activating its hotline to provide residents with the information they need to protect themselves and their families." The new routing system will enable the caller to gain access to the public health professional most equipped to answer their specific question.

The flu, or influenza, is a virus that can be spread from person to person through coughing or sneezing. Symptoms include: fever, cough, sore throat, headache, chills, muscle aches, and extreme tiredness. The symptoms of H1N1 flu are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu, but some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with H1N1 flu. Every year, seasonal flu infects between 5 percent and 20 percent of a population and kills between 250,000 and 500,000 people globally. But unlike seasonal flu, research shows that older children and young adults are by far the most likely to be infected with the new H1N1 virus.

Take Steps to Limit the Spread of Germs

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Put used tissues in a wastebasket.
- Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve if you don't have a tissue.
- Stay at home if you are sick.

For more information on seasonal and H1N1 influenza, visit www.flu.gov/ or call the Health Department's flu hotline at 209-8393.

###
