

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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Last year's novel H1N1 flu and the need to have more than one flu vaccine has some people wondering what options are available this year. Becky Corman, public health nurse, said this year the H1N1 strain along with two other flu strains is included in one trivalent seasonal flu vaccine.

"People who were vaccinated with the 2009 H1N1 vaccine or last year's seasonal vaccine need to be vaccinated with the seasonal flu vaccine this year," Corman said. "This season's vaccine provides protection against other influenza strains which were not in either the seasonal or the 2009 H1N1 vaccine last season."

The seasonal flu vaccine is available in the Panhandle now. Corman said, "There has been no indication of a vaccine shortage, so providers in the panhandle will most likely have vaccine very soon if they don't have some already." Some retail pharmacies are also offering flu vaccinations.

"Flu is unpredictable and can be severe. In the United States, between 5-20% of the population gets the flu each season. It is estimated more than 200,000 people nationwide are hospitalized from flu-related complications," Corman said.

The CDC recommends everyone six months and older get vaccinated. "Flu seasons can start early or run late and the flu vaccine provides protection that should last through a full flu season. You should get vaccinated as soon as vaccine becomes available in your community," Corman added.

The CDC recommends a three-step approach to protect against the flu:

1. Take the time to get a flu vaccine.
2. Take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs, including frequent hand washing and staying home when sick; and
3. Take flu antiviral drugs when your doctor prescribes them.

For additional information about the flu vaccination contact your local health care provider. The purpose of the Panhandle Public Health District is to educate the region it serves about the prevention of epidemics, spread of contagious diseases, injury, illness and disability. The district is charged with promoting and encouraging healthy behaviors. They promote the quality and accessibility of health services and protection against environmental hazards. Through education, protection and promotion of these issues, the Panhandle Public Health District believes the quality of life of the residents they serve can be greatly improved.