

Health commissioner: H1N1 vaccination safe, important



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County Health Commissioner Dr. Boyd Hoddinott has heard from a number of area residents who are concerned about the safety of the newly available H1N1 vaccination, but said their fears are unfounded.

“The vaccine is safe. Everyone in my office is getting one,” said the physician who practices at Maple Leaf Family & Sports Medicine, 2211 Timber Trail. He received an H1N1 shot Wednesday at the Logan County Health District.

“People do not need to be afraid of the vaccine. It was developed exactly the same way as the seasonal flu vaccine, and we haven’t had bad reactions with that vaccine over the past 25 years.”

All individuals who receive a H1N1 vaccination must register with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which enables the agency to keep a database of these people and to follow up with careful monitoring. Thus far, the CDC has not reported any adverse reactions to the vaccine, Dr. Hoddinott said.

Turnout was lower than expected at the health district’s free H1N1 vaccination clinics last week for health care workers, and this week for health care workers and pregnant women. A total of 384 people have received the immunization. Dr. Hoddinott links the low numbers to the concerns about the vaccine.

High risk groups will continue to be targeted next week with a free clinic for primary caregivers of infants younger than 6 months from 4 to 7 p.m. Wednesday at the Discovery Center, 1973 W. State Route 47. Preregistration is required at <https://h1n1vaccine.odh.ohio.gov>. Take a copy of the two-page registration form to the clinic.

The health commissioner encourages all individuals to receive the vaccination when their group is called, especially considering that the number of area residents experiencing flu-like symptoms has spiked in the past four to five days. Area schools are reporting high absentee rates, and Upper Scioto Valley Schools reported a middle school student has been diagnosed with influenza type A, and is under a physician’s care.

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