

Immunize Georgia



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF
COMMUNITY HEALTH

A publication of the Georgia Department of Community Health

2011 ISSUE 1



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WHAT'S INSIDE

ACIP Changes to 2011 Immunization Schedule

In February 2011, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) made changes to the immunization schedule. These changes involved Tdap, meningococcal and MMR vaccines. Updated immunization schedules are posted on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at: <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/schedules/default.htm>.

Influenza

For the 2010 - 2011 influenza season, the most significant change is a new universal recommendation for all persons 6 months of age and older to receive his or her flu vaccination. This represents an expansion of the previous recommendations for annual vaccination for all adults and is supported by evidence that annual influenza vaccination is a safe and effective preventive health action with potential benefit in all age groups. According to the CDC:

As in previous recommendations, all children aged 6 months - 8 years who receive a seasonal influenza vaccine for the first time should receive two doses. Children who received only one dose of a seasonal influenza vaccine in the first influenza season should receive two doses, rather than one, in the following influenza season. Additionally, for the 2010 - 2011 influenza season, children aged 6 months - 8 years who did not receive at least one dose of an influenza A (H1N1) 2009 monovalent vaccine should receive two doses of a 2010 - 2011 seasonal influenza vaccine, regardless of previous influenza vaccination history. Children aged 6 months - 8 years for whom the previous 2009 - 2010 seasonal or influenza A (H1N1) 2009 monovalent vaccine history cannot be determined should receive two doses of a 2010 - 2011 seasonal influenza vaccine.

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Symptoms of the flu

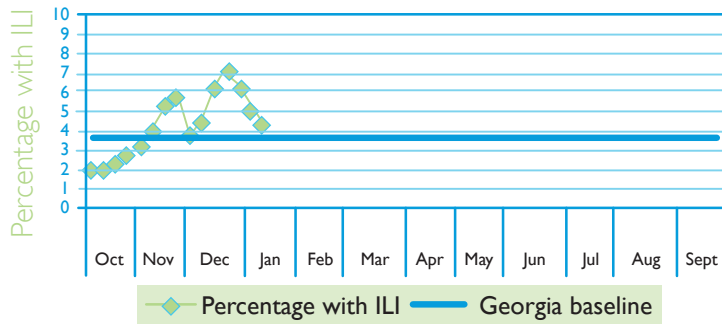
People who have the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- fever* or feeling feverish/chills
- cough
- sore throat

- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle or body aches
- headaches
- fatigue
- sometimes vomiting and diarrhea

**It's important to note that not everyone with the flu will have a fever.*

Percentage of patients with ILI who visited an ILINet provider 2010 - 2011



Regular state influenza activity is reported weekly based on data provided by the ILINet. To be added to the distribution list, contact Delmar Little, MPH, Influenza Surveillance Epidemiologist with the Georgia Department of Community Health. The influenza surveillance report can also be found at <http://health.state.ga.us/epi/flu/fluupd10.asp>. To enroll as an ILINet sentinel provider, contact your district epidemiologist.

Influenza in Georgia

According to the CDC, Georgia has seen higher-than-average rates of flu activity, especially through November and December of 2010 and into early February 2011.

The Georgia Division of Public Health monitors influenza activity throughout the state with the help of volunteer sentinel providers (private providers, occupational health providers, student health clinics and emergency departments). While each individual case of the flu is not reportable to health authorities, the percent of providers' visits that are for "influenza-like illness" (ILI) is monitored. When indicators begin to increase compared to background levels, it is suspected influenza is active in an area. ●

Congratulations to the Recipients of the 2010 Walt Orenstein Champions for Immunization Award

The winners of the 2010 Walt Orenstein Champions for Immunization Award were announced October 12, 2010 at the 17th Annual Immunize Georgia Conference held in Macon, Georgia. The award, named after Walt Orenstein, M.D., honors those who exemplify the immunization care set forth in the Standards for Child Adolescent Immunization Practices. These standards are a national strategy to protect America's children against vaccine-preventable diseases and provide guidelines and resources to follow when providing immunizations. Dr. Orenstein is credited with attaining the highest immunization levels ever in the United States, and spent 26 years with the CDC focusing on infectious disease and immunizations. He now works as Deputy Director for vaccine-preventable diseases at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

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Did you know? Influenza "Flu" Facts

- The single best way to prevent the flu is to get vaccinated each year
- Every flu season is different than the one before
- The "flu shot" is an inactivated vaccine given with a needle
- Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine
- An alternative method to shots is the nasal-spray flu vaccine*

*Vaccination with the nasal-spray flu vaccine is an option for healthy people 2 - 49 years of age who are not pregnant.

The 2010 recipients of the Walt Orenstein Champions for Immunization Award are:

Phoebe Putney Hospital Network of Trust School Health Program

Established in 1911, Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital is a nonprofit community hospital located in Albany, Georgia. It is one of Georgia's largest comprehensive regional medical centers.

The Phoebe Putney Hospital Network of Trust School Health Program collaborated with Southwest Georgia Public Health District 8-2 and the Georgia Public Health Association Epidemiology Section in a two-day event. Titled, "Building Bridges: A Community Affair," this event was designed to protect the citizens of Georgia and exemplified all standards set forth in the Standards for Child Adolescent Immunization Practices.

With 160 attendees, the event attracted hospital personnel, school nurses, physicians, nurses and other health care workers. "Building Bridges: A Community Affair" created dialogue between health care providers and updated local health care personnel on the current adult and pediatric Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendations, disease reporting, GRITS usage and CDC standards. This event provided an avenue for public and private health care providers in southwest Georgia to meet and develop true partnerships in immunizing the population, regardless of where they receive health care services.

Standards met through the Network of Trust School Health Program included assessment of vaccination status, proper storage, administration and documentation of vaccinations, and implementation of strategies to improve vaccination coverage.

Laurens County Health Department

With American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding, the Laurens County Health Department was able to administer 1,700 Tdap vaccines in their community at business clinics, schools, churches, gyms, beauty salons, civic clubs, doctor's offices and fire stations. Without a loss in patient services, the health department made it easy for community members to receive the vaccination by holding clinics at various times during the day, as well as nights and weekends. Through efforts such as family referrals for immunizations, outreach to the community increased.

Standards met through the Laurens County vaccination outreach program included availability of vaccines, assessment of vaccination status, proper storage, administration and documentation of vaccinations, and implementation of strategies to improve vaccination coverage.

Union County Health Department

The Union County Health Department administered 8,200 vaccines to 4,000 clients. Vaccines provided included H1N1, seasonal flu and the meningococcal vaccine, which was administered free to high school students. The work, funded through a special grant provided by the local Rotary Club, successfully immunized approximately 20 percent of Union County's population.

In addition to the great work completed through vaccinating more than 8,000 residents of Union County, the Union County Health Department also partners with the local school system, nursing homes and businesses to provide annual flu clinics while maintaining partnerships with all area health care providers.

Located in Blairsville, Georgia, the Union County Health Department worked to improve the health of its citizens through the promotion of health services and disease prevention. Standards met through their vaccination program included availability of vaccines, assessment of vaccination status, proper storage and administration of vaccines, documentation of vaccinations and implementation of strategies to improve vaccination coverage. ●

- The flu shot vaccine cannot give you the flu
- Influenza is spread through droplets made when those with the flu cough, sneeze or talk and these droplets land in the mouths or noses of people nearby or land on surfaces touched by others
- The flu can be contagious before symptoms appear and sometimes continue to be contagious during sickness
- The flu season starts as early as September and can last as late as May
- Staying home when you have the flu is one way to keep others from getting sick
- The flu vaccine will not protect you from colds or upper respiratory viruses that also circulate during the flu season





Clay Coleman with LaTonya Thomas –
2010 Winner

LaTonya Thomas Receives 5th Annual Clay Coleman Excellence in Customer Service Award

As the winner of the 2010 Clay Coleman Excellence in Customer Service Award, LaTonya Thomas demonstrates the highest standards in ensuring health care providers are well-educated and equipped to protect the citizens of Georgia against vaccine-preventable diseases. Thomas is assessment coordinator for the Georgia Department of Community Health and performs above and beyond in service through her work, handling constant emails and phone calls daily and always willing to put in extra time. She is a consummate team worker and exemplary in the way she responds to all requests.

The Clay Coleman Excellence in Customer Service Award is named for Clay Coleman, who received the Service Excellence Award from the Georgia Immunization Program for his commitment to provide exceptional customer service for the program from 1993 to 2006. The Award is presented annually to a Georgia Immunization Program employee who exhibits excellent customer service. ●

Immunize Georgia Welcomes Sheila Lovett New Vaccine Manager, Vaccines for Children Program

The Georgia Department of Community Health welcomes Sheila Lovett, the new Vaccine Manager for the Vaccines for Children Program. Sheila has nine years of experience in the public health field working with VFC and HIV/STD. Sheila began her public health career in immunization working with the VFC program in a field staff role and then with HIV/STD before returning to immunization. In her most recent public health position, she served as the Vaccine Manager for the City of Chicago's VPOP pilot project area where she served as lead for her site. An Atlanta native and graduate of Clark Atlanta University, the Georgia Department of Community Health is pleased to welcome Sheila back to Georgia. ●

Who should not be vaccinated against seasonal flu?

Some people should not be vaccinated without first consulting a physician, including:

- People who have a severe allergy to chicken eggs
- People who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination in the past
- People who developed Guillian-Barré syndrome (GBS) within six weeks of getting an influenza vaccine previously
- Children younger than 6 months of age (influenza vaccine is not approved for use in this age group)
- People who have a moderate or severe illness with a fever should wait to get vaccinated until their symptoms lessen

If you have questions about whether you should get a flu vaccine, consult your health care provider.



Parent Pages



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Parent Pages 2011 ISSUE 1

A Parent's Guide to the Flu



What is the flu?

The flu (influenza) is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs caused by influenza viruses. The flu is unpredictable and changes every flu season. It can cause illness, hospital stays or even deaths in the United States every year.

The letters often heard associated with influenza viruses stand for their type and subtype. Commonly, there are influenza A viruses and the milder influenza B viruses; however, sometimes, a new influenza virus can emerge like the influenza A H1N1 last year.

How serious is the flu?

Every flu season is different, and the effects of the flu can vary from mild to severe depending on the body's ability to fight infection. Even healthy children and adults can get very sick from the flu and spread it to friends, co-workers and family. While the flu can make anyone sick, some are at a greater risk for serious illness, such as older adults, young children and those who have certain long-term health conditions including asthma, diabetes, heart disease and women who are pregnant.

Flu symptoms can include:

- fever*
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- body aches
- headache
- chills
- fatigue
- sometimes diarrhea and vomiting

**It's important to note that not everyone with the flu will have a fever.*

How does the flu spread?

Most experts think that the flu viruses are spread mainly through droplets that pass through the air when people with the flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. A person might also get the flu by touching a surface or object that has the

flu virus on it and then touching their own eyes, mouth or nose. People infected with influenza may be able to infect others from one day before getting sick to about 5 - 7 days *after* getting sick. The time period when people are contagious varies and may be longer for children, or those with weakened immune systems.

What can I do to protect myself and my children from getting sick from the flu?

There are a number of ways to prevent sickness and protect yourself and your loved ones from the flu this season. The first and most important step should be making sure you and all your loved ones aged 6 months and older receive a flu vaccine each year.

A new flu vaccine is made each year to protect against the three flu viruses that research indicates are most likely to cause illness during the next flu season. This season's vaccine protects against the H1N1 virus that caused so much illness last season, an influenza A H3N2 virus, and an influenza B virus. This season's flu vaccine is created using the same safety and production methods and dosage as past flu vaccines. Over the years, millions of flu vaccines have been given in the United States.

Who should receive a flu vaccine?

While it is important everyone gets a flu vaccine each flu season, it is especially important that young children and children with long-term health conditions get vaccinated. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also recommends pregnant women receive their flu vaccination as another way to protect both themselves and their babies. Research shows receiving the vaccine while pregnant can protect the baby during pregnancy and for a few months after birth.

A Parent's Guide to the Flu

Other ways to protect against the flu include everyday preventive actions such as:

- Cover coughs and sneezes by directing them into the bend of your arm or covering with a tissue and immediately disposing the tissue into the trash;
- Wash hands often with soap and water;
- If soap and water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand rub;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth since germs are easily spread this way;
- If someone in the household becomes sick, try to keep the sick person in a separate room from others in the house if possible;
- Keep surfaces, especially in common areas of your household, clean by wiping them down with disinfectant according to directions on the product label.

What should I do if I get sick?

If you become ill with influenza symptoms, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to seek medical care. The CDC recommends remaining at home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to seek medical help. Most people are able to recover at home from the flu without medical care, but consult your health care provider for advice.

What can I do if my child gets sick?

Always speak with your health care provider if you are worried about your child's illness. For children 5 years of age and older who do not have other health problems, but get flu-like symptoms including a fever and/or cough, consult your health care provider as needed and make sure your child drinks plenty of fluids and gets plenty of rest.

Children younger than 5 years of age – especially younger than 2 years of age with a long-term health condition – are at risk for serious complications from the flu. Ask your health care provider if your child should be examined.

If your child, of any age, should exhibit any of these “emergency warning signs” call for emergency care or take your child to a doctor right away.

Emergency Warning Signs

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids (not going to the bathroom or producing as much urine as they normally do)
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Irritability to the point that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Presence of other conditions (like heart or lung disease, diabetes or asthma) and develops flu symptoms including a fever and/or cough

Can my child go to school, day care or camp if he or she is sick?

No. Your child should stay home to rest and avoid giving the flu to other children or caregivers.

When can my child go back to school after having the flu?

Keep your child home from school, day care or camp for at least 24 hours after his or her fever is gone. A fever is defined as 100°F or 37.8°C and higher.

Can flu infections be treated?

Yes. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder) that fight against the flu in your body. While a flu vaccine is the first and most important step in preventing the flu, antiviral drugs are a second line of defense to treat the flu if you get sick. Antiviral drugs are not a substitute for vaccination and require a prescription. Call your health care provider for consultation if you think your child has the flu. ●

For more information on influenza, the influenza vaccine, or what to do if you or your children get sick, visit <http://health.state.ga.us/programs/immunization/flu.asp> and www.flu.gov.



The CDC recommends three steps to fight the flu

1 TAKE TIME TO GET A FLU VACCINE

2 TAKE EVERYDAY PREVENTIVE ACTIONS TO STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

3 TAKE FLU ANTIVIRAL DRUGS IF YOUR DOCTOR PRESCRIBES THEM

An Interview with Frank Bowyer, M.D.

Medical Director and Chief of Pediatrics of the Children's Hospital at the Medical Center of Central Georgia, Dr. Bowyer is also a professor at the Mercer University School of Medicine and serves as the Thomas B. and Doris E. Black Chair of Pediatrics.



Q. One of the major changes in this year's ACIP recommendation is the expansion of the Tdap vaccine to include adults 65 or older. How do you think this will affect the rate of pertussis in infants and young children?

A. Adults in this age group are often very involved in the lives of young children as grandparents, caretakers and members of the household. Since adults are often a source of the pertussis transmission, it only makes sense that this age group be included in Tdap vaccination recommendations. We lose our immunity naturally as we get older, so in actuality, it is important for the elderly to be vaccinated as well.

Q. What are your thoughts on the new universal recommendation for the flu vaccine?

A. This year, the recommendation is for everyone 6 months of age and older to receive his or her flu vaccine. The message has been much more aggressive as a result of last year's influenza season, but we know that the flu is often spread by kids and not adults, and the influenza vaccine is a safe and effective means of protecting against the flu. Influenza viruses can cause disease among people in any age group, but rates of infection are highest among children according to the CDC. The extension of the previous recommendation for adults age 19 - 49 to everyone 6 months and older will have a benefit to all age groups.

Q. What have you seen so far in terms of influenza activity this year?

A. In Macon, we have seen lots of flu activity but not a lot of admissions in critical care or serious hospitalizations of children due to influenza. The flu can never be predicted and depends largely on climate and weather. Health care workers should continue to offer influenza vaccines throughout the flu season, which can extend through May 2011.

Q. Do you have other pearls of wisdom for us?

A. Get immunized. Whether you are an adult or child, it is always important to get immunized. As health care providers, it's our duty to get immunized and to never forget common sense. Wash your hands frequently and stay home when you're sick. It's kids who spread the flu but it's daddy who takes it to work. ●



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Georgia Department of Community Health presents the

18TH ANNUAL **Immunize** Georgia CONFERENCE

The 18th Annual Immunize Georgia Conference will be held at the Macon Marriott City Center in Macon, Georgia on September 15, 2011. As always, the latest information and updates on the immunization schedule will be provided as well as a roster of talented, knowledgeable speakers. Nomination forms for the Walt Orenstein Champions for Immunization Award and Clay Coleman Excellence in Customer Service Award will be distributed and available in Summer 2011. Remember Walt Orenstein Champions for Immunization Award recipients exhibit excellent care in decreasing vaccine-preventable diseases in their community. And the Clay Coleman Excellence in Customer Service Award winner is an individual who goes above and beyond the call of duty in the goal to immunize Georgia. Conference brochures and further details to come. ●

For information, call **404.367.2766** or email immunizegeorgia@golinharris.com