

Tuesday, November 10, 2009

Graham Health Center has H1N1 flu vaccines available for OU community

By **Dave Groves**, staff writer

Though demand for the H1N1 vaccine is peaking, Graham Health Center still has nasal doses available for Oakland University students, faculty and staff.

The vaccine is provided free of charge for students, while staff and faculty staff can receive a dose for \$10. Those interested in receiving the nasal vaccine can visit the health center anytime during regular business hours, which are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays, except on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, when the center is open until 6 p.m. Doses also are available during weekly outreach clinics on campus, which are posted on the **Graham Health Center Web site**.

Health Center Director Nancy Jansen said she hopes more students will take advantage of free vaccine doses, particularly given that this age group is among the most vulnerable to H1N1. Unfortunately, she and others at Graham have seen many students avoid the vaccine based on misperceptions about its effects.

"There's a lot of misinformation out there, and that gets frustrating," she said. "The vaccine is safe and effective, and the side effects really are minimal."

To date, Graham Health Center has administered about 1,000 doses of H1N1 vaccine to students. Meanwhile, Jansen said the campus has seen about 20 confirmed cases of the infection this fall, and all of those with it have recovered. Health Center workers hope the ongoing vaccination campaign will help keep infection numbers low.

Nasal doses are available for those under 50 years of age who are not pregnant and do not have a chronic disease such as asthma or diabetes. The nasal vaccine is not recommended for those 50 years of age and older.

To limit the spread of the virus as much as possible, the campus community is encouraged to practice diligent personal hygiene. This should include:

- Washing hands thoroughly and frequently
- Using hand sanitizers with at least 60 percent alcohol when soap is not available
- Not touching the eyes, nose and mouth
- Using a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing
- Avoiding direct contact with fixtures in public restrooms
- Avoiding shared use of cell phones and keeping them clean
- Cleaning personal and shared work spaces and equipment, including desk phones, preferably with a disinfectant that is labeled as virucidal or effective against influenza H1N1
- Avoiding crowded areas and shaking hands
- Limiting social contact with anyone exhibiting flu-like symptoms

Another way to prevent infection is to boost the immune system by eating healthy foods and getting adequate sleep.

Those wishing to learn more about the status of the pandemic are encouraged to monitor advisories issued by the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** and the **World Health Organization (WHO)**. For more additional information on the status of the H1N1 flu pandemic and infection prevention methods, visit **OU's Infection Prevention & Control Web site**, the **Oakland County Health Division Web site** and **www.flu.gov**.

SUMMARY

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