



PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT
300 N. San Antonio Road • Santa Barbara, CA 93110
(805) 681-5102 • FAX (805) 681-5191
www.sbcphd.org

P R E S S R E L E A S E

News Media Contact:

Susan Klein-Rothschild
Public Information Officer
(805) 681-5435
(805) 896-1057 (cell)
sklein@sbcphd.org

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H1N1 FLU VACCINATION MYTHS AND FACTS

Flu vaccinations save thousands of lives each year, but some people avoid flu vaccines for themselves and their children because of misinformation and misunderstanding.

County Health Officer Dr. Peter Hasler explained, “Many people falsely believe that vaccinations cause the diseases they actually help prevent. While some children and adults may have a low-grade fever or body aches for a day or two after being vaccinated, most people have no significant reactions, other than possibly a sore arm. The prevention benefits of flu and other vaccinations strongly outweigh the associated risks.” Flu vaccines are effective in preventing the flu for 70 – 80% of the individuals who receive the flu vaccine.

The H1N1 flu vaccine is being produced using the same methods that have been used to produce seasonal flu vaccines. The vaccine has been tested and has been found to have a similar safety profile as seasonal flu vaccines, which have a very good safety track record. In fact, the H1N1 vaccine has been tested more extensively than the typical seasonal flu vaccine.

Some people have questions about preservatives, such as thimerosal, in flu vaccines. Thimerosal is a preservative that protects vaccines against contamination in opened multi-dose vials of vaccine. The scientific community supports the use of thimerosal in influenza vaccines and research has shown that it is safe to use in vaccines. While most of the H1N1 vaccine that will be available will be in multi-dose vials with thimerosal, some vaccine will be available that is thimerosal free or with trace amounts of thimerosal.

Allergic reactions to vaccines among people with severe egg allergies are the most likely serious health risk associated with vaccination, because many vaccines are produced in an egg-based medium. People with egg allergies are advised to check with their doctor before getting H1N1 or any vaccination.

For more information about H1N1 flu, visit www.sbcfluinfo.org, call 1-888-722-6358 or follow us on twitter at SBCPublicHealth.

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