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## **P R E S S R E L E A S E**

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September 18, 2009  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Antiviral Medications and H1N1**

Many people have questions about the use of anti-viral medications, such as TamiFlu, for H1N1 flu. These questions are coming up because the H1N1 vaccine is not yet available and people are assuming that if they get the flu, that they need to be treated with anti-viral medication. For most people, this is not the case. Here are some things that are important to know:

First, it's important to understand that most people recover from the flu, both seasonal and H1N1 with comfort measures, such as over-the counter medications, rest, liquids and healthy foods.

Second, anti-viral medications do not cure a person with H1N1. They can lessen the symptoms or shorten the duration of the illness. The Centers for Disease Control does not recommend anti-viral use to treat all those who are sick with H1N1 but only for certain groups -- those who are admitted to a hospital, or who are seriously ill with infection in their lungs, or who are at high risk for complications.

While anti-viral medications can be used to prevent getting the flu if a person has close contact with H1N1, doctors limit this use to those at highest risk for severe illness. This close contact is considered to be contact within 6 feet of a person with H1N1 for at least 10 minutes in an enclosed space.

People are considered high risk for purposes of preventive treatment if they are children younger than 5 years old, adults 65 years and older, pregnant women, persons with certain chronic medical or immunosuppressive conditions, people with a severe obesity and persons younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy.

For most people, prevention is the best strategy. The Public Health Department (PHD) encourages everyone to follow six steps to decrease the spread of H1N1 Flu and lessen their chance of becoming ill.

- Get the seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 vaccine when it is available for you based on your age and medical condition.
- Wash your hands frequently or using alcohol-based hand sanitizers
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Sneeze or cough into your upper arm or sleeve to avoid contaminating your hands
- Stay home when you are ill to avoid spreading illness to others
- Avoid contact with others who are ill

For more information, see the Public Health Department's website [www.sbcfluinfo.org](http://www.sbcfluinfo.org). For additional questions, contact your health care provider or call the H1N1 Information Line toll-free at 1-888-722-6358.

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