

Washington State Department of Health Asthma Program
Asthma and Swine Flu (H1N1) - Key Messages for Healthcare Providers and Caregivers
September 28, 2009

- People with asthma are at high-risk for influenza-related complications, such as pneumonia. CDC is developing plans to reach out to people with asthma to optimize the use of vaccine and antivirals with the goal of decreasing illness and death.
- All people with asthma should have and use an updated asthma action plan developed with their physician for daily treatment and for control of worsening symptoms. Parents of children with asthma should ensure that an updated asthma action plan is on file at their child's school and that the plan and medication(s) are readily accessible if needed.
- People with asthma should be vaccinated for both seasonal and novel H1N1 influenza viruses as soon as these vaccines are available. The influenza A (H1N1) 2009 monovalent vaccine should be taken in addition to the seasonal influenza vaccine and not as a replacement for it.
- People with asthma should seek health care at the earliest signs of influenza-like symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue.
- Health care clinicians should follow CDC guidelines for empiric treatment with oseltamivir (trade name Tamiflu) for people with asthma presenting with influenza-like illness. Because of the risk for serious adverse events and because efficacy has not been demonstrated among persons with asthma, zanamivir (trade name Relenza) is not recommended for treatment for patients with underlying airway disease.
- Along with everyone else, people with asthma should take everyday actions to protect their health and to control the spread of influenza, by practicing frequent hand washing and respiratory etiquette; that is, cover your cough with a disposable tissue or cough in your sleeve and encourage others to cover their coughs in the same way. And to protect others, stay home if you are sick.
- For more information, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/on> the web or contact CDC at 1-800-CDC-INFO.