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HOURS URGENT CARE

“Combined” Flu Vaccine Is New for 2010

Every fall, millions of Americans, including my family and myself, get an annual flu shot. Influenza kills approximately 36,000 people per year in the United States and approximately 300,000 to 500,000 people world-wide. Last year panic spread regarding the possibility of a H1N1, or “Swine Flu” Pandemic. Fortunately, the outbreak turned out to be much milder than feared, although Swine Flu did claim approximately 2,000 lives in the United States.

Last year, because the H1N1 Swine Flu presented so suddenly, it was too late to incorporate it into the yearly flu vaccine—therefore a separate H1N1 vaccine was hastily produced. Many Americans were hesitant to take this vaccine because of fears that it was not properly tested, thus millions of doses were unused and ultimately discarded. For 2010, the H1N1 Swine Flu vaccine has been incorporated into the yearly seasonal flu vaccination, and this combined vaccine has undergone rigorous testing.

Because H1N1 Flu has the potential to hit much sooner than seasonal flu, the 2010 combined vaccine is being released much earlier than in previous years. The CDC recommends vaccination, especially for higher-risk patients such as children, pregnant women, health care workers, the elderly and people with chronic illnesses or weak immune systems. For most people, only one shot will be needed this year. No vaccination is without potential risks, but when it comes to the flu, the benefits of vaccination outweigh the risks.

The 2010 Flu Vaccine will be available at East Jefferson After Hours Urgent Care and at other providers in mid-August. ▀

As seen in

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