



# TRIPLER ARMY MEDICAL CENTER

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## **H1N1 vaccine available for all Army personnel and military families**

TRIPLER ARMY MEDICAL CENTER—H1N1 vaccine, in both injectable and nasal spray forms, is now available for all military and civilian personnel, as well as military family members.

“There is now enough H1N1 vaccine for all beneficiaries, including any Department of Defense civilian that requests it,” said Col. (Dr.) Mike Sigmon, Tripler’s chief of preventive medicine.

Sigmon said that while influenza cases nationwide are at or slightly below the baseline for this time of the year, H1N1 cases remain by far the predominant strain in Hawaii and elsewhere. If the novel H1N1 strain follows the historical pattern for seasonal flu, a third wave of influenza outbreaks could occur in March. Sigmon emphasized that vaccination remains the single best method for stopping the spread of the virus, before it seriously impacts the workplace, schools, and families.

“Currently, our general population, other than active duty, has immunizations rates of around 40%. This is not sufficient to stop an outbreak,” Sigmon said.

Vaccine production could not meet the demand during earlier waves of outbreaks around the world that began last summer. Vaccinations were then prioritized to reach those most vulnerable to the deadly effects of flu virus. However, as vaccine production has stabilized, prioritization is no longer an issue.

Sigmon noted that while the State of Hawaii Department of Health partnered with local schools to provide students with H1N1 vaccinations late last year, those younger than 9 years old who have received only one vaccination must receive their second, booster shot, to ensure the vaccine’s effectiveness.

Also, while previous CDC guidance had delayed vaccination of those 65 years and older, now that the vaccine is readily available, the older populations should get vaccinated. “Seniors are not completely immune to the newest strain of the H1N1 virus. They may have serious complications if they become ill,” Sigmon said.

On Thursday, Feb. 18, as part of a USARPAC civilian walk and health and wellness fair, injectable vaccinations will be available for all civilians at the Fort Shafter physical fitness center from 9 to 10 a.m. For more information, call the Tripler Army Community Nurse office at 433-6834.

For more information about clinics offering vaccinations, call the Tripler flu hotline, 433-1FLU, or type “Tripler Fight the Flu” into the search window of internet search engines.



As vaccination supplies have increased, Army civilian employees can now receive H1N1 vaccinations at Army medical clinics. Jun Manuel, LPN at the Schofield Barracks allergy-immunology clinic, demonstrates giving the nasal vaccine to Schofield Barracks Health Clinic’s patient representative Philip Snell. U.S. Army photo by Les Ozawa

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