

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services recommends that people at high risk for complications and anyone who wants to reduce their risk of becoming ill due to seasonal influenza get that flu shot now.

“It’s not too early to get vaccinated for seasonal flu,” said Dr. Joann Schaefer, the state’s Chief Medical Officer. “Vaccine is already available in many communities. Getting vaccinated is a great way to protect yourself and your loved ones.”

While the seasonal vaccine is available in most areas now, the H1N1 vaccine is not expected to be available until mid-October.

Health officials believe that people who get their seasonal flu vaccine now will still have immunity in January and February, which are the peak months for seasonal flu, so getting the vaccine early should not be a problem.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends seasonal influenza vaccination for the following:

- Anyone who wants to reduce the risk of becoming ill with influenza or of transmitting it to others
- Children six months through 18 years
- Adults 50 years of age and older
- Pregnant women
- Those 19 through 49 years of age with certain chronic medical conditions, like diabetes, asthma, heart disease, or compromised immune systems
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities
- Health care professionals
- People who live with, care for or come into close contact with persons at risk, including children younger than six months of age and individuals with chronic medical conditions or compromised immunity.