

University expects to vaccinate student body by end of November

Neel Arora
Reporter

The long-awaited H1N1 flu vaccine will hit the market this week, and university officials expect to have enough stock available to immunize the entire student population by the end of November.

A schedule has not been made for administering the H1N1 vaccine to students, staff and faculty, as it has not been portioned out to the state, which is responsible for its distribution, said Jana Lynn Patterson, assistant vice president for student life.

"As it comes in, we will give it to everyone," said Kitty Parrish, director of health services.

The initial batch of 6 to 7 million vaccines will be made available nationwide with the intent to vaccinate Americans most susceptible to the virus. This group includes pregnant women, infants, health care professionals and chronically ill people, Parrish said.

Individuals age 26 and younger are at the most risk, while people older than 52 are less at-risk because they have some amount of immunity to

the strain.

The university will judge those most at-risk through the medical records maintained by Health Services.

By mid-October, about 40 million doses will be available in the country, with an additional 10-20 million more each week, according to federal officials.

The first batch will be unsuitable for a large portion of the population, as it will be in the form of a nasal spray containing a live culture. Later batches of the vaccines will be composed of a dead sample in injection form.

People with allergies, asthma and other preexisting conditions will not be able to take the first batch of the vaccine. Only those between the ages of 2 and 49 will be able to take it. Individuals living with someone suffering from major health disorders will not be eligible.

So far, there have been three confirmed cases of H1N1 reported to Elon's Health Services and 11 cases of the common seasonal flu, none of which have been life-threatening or required hospitalization, Patterson said.

There might be an additional number of students that showed symptoms, but either went home or did not report them to Health Services, Patterson said.

Senior Martin Burke said he had both swine flu and pneumonia at the same time during the summer.

He was with around 15 other people who had confirmed cases of H1N1 and pneumonia. They were all together in a confined space.

"I woke up one morning feeling terrible," he said. "I was really tired. I had cold chills, nausea, fatigue, cough and congestion."

Burke has never taken a flu shot before and said he is still indifferent to the availability of either vaccine.

Through the months of August and September, Health Services has seen about 1,700 patients with 167, about 10 percent, showing mild flu-like symptoms like a cough, cold or sore throat.

"The numbers have been a little higher than we would normally see," Patterson said. "We don't know if we have hit the peak yet."



PHOTO COURTESY OF MCT CAMPUS
A registered nurse administers the flu vaccine to a patient. Seasonal flu shots will be offered on campus at the end of this month.

Elon usually does not have any flu cases this early in the year, and university officials do not begin reporting cases to the Center for Disease Control until the first week of October.

About 500 people have died from the H1N1 virus in the United States, and more than 35,000 cases have been reported nationwide.

"We really encourage students to take the seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 vaccine when they become available," Patterson said.

Seasonal flu vaccines will be available in Moseley Oct. 26-30.

Until the vaccines are made available, health services and the CDC recommend students take certain precautions: wash hands frequently, cough into the sleeve, wipe down public spaces and avoid sharing drinks with others.

Health services urges students who are showing flu-like symptoms to report them immediately.

The H1N1 virus is highly curable and usually takes a patient about a week to 10 days to recover. Symptoms are similar to those of the seasonal flu.

Study shows running no longer considered dangerous arthritis risk

Samantha King
Assistant News Editor

For years, medical experts have thought running, along with other forms of strenuous exercise, can have negative effects on bones and joints, often citing it as a cause of arthritis. But recent studies by the Stanford School of Medicine disagree.

Arthritis is a long-term disease that leads to inflammation of the joints and surrounding tissues, causing joint pain and discomfort. While the sources of arthritis are currently unknown, studies suggest running is not only non-detrimental to one's health, but also may actually be beneficial.

Elon Associate Athletic Trainer Martin Baker said he agrees.

"With the anecdotal rigors of (athletic) competition, you would think that it would cause severe joint damage," he said. "We just don't see that."

Because college athleticism can be intense and extremely vigorous for the body, a study on athletes as they age versus the rest of the population may be beneficial for continual research, Baker said. While Elon does not follow its athletes after they graduate, Baker said it would be a good study to conduct.

"We don't follow them beyond 22 years of age," Baker said. "It would be interesting to survey them at 40 to see if they have a higher percentage of joint damage than the rest of the population."

But because Elon University students are initially from all across the country, tracking them down once they leave would be feasibly impossible, Baker said.

According to a recent article by NPR, every time a runner strikes the ground, they are applying eight times their normal body weight.

"With this in mind, it makes sense that it would cause the joint to prematurely age," Baker said. "They were surprised, to say the least, at their findings."

The study by Stanford found in addition to having no arthritis link, those who run have longer life spans and lower risks of disabilities when they get older.

Baker said the best way to avoid bone and joint risks, if you do not run regularly, is simply to take advantage of Elon's resources.

"Walk instead of taking the BioBus," Baker said. "Take advantage of the fitness center. The benefits of walking and running are pretty much the same. They all work at strengthening the muscles around the joints."

The joint is made up of three components: the skeletal makeup of the joint, the ligaments and the muscles around the joints.

According to Baker, the more build up of the muscles around the joints, the more support the joints have and the stronger they are.

Although Baker is an advocate of exercise to decrease the risk of arthritis, he warns that starting a regiment too quickly could be more damaging than helpful.

"Most people get into trouble by doing too much too quick," Baker said.

One should start gradually and make practical goals. A new runner should not expect to suddenly run a 5K, but should gradually work toward it during a three to four week time period, Baker said.

Nearby county targets STDs with Walmart gift cards

Cyntra Brown
Reporter

Forsyth County's Department of Health in Winston-Salem has been bringing health care door-to-door by providing Wal-Mart gift cards to promote syphilis testing.

Prevent Ongoing Spread of STDs Everywhere is a group that serves those who are not able to seek facilities for medical attention. Patrice Toney, a member of POSSE, is the HIV and STD prevention supervisor for Forsyth County's Department of Public Health.

Forsyth County is ranked No. 1 in the state for the highest population of people with the venereal disease. Toney was involved in the effort, which used gift cards as rewards for those who volunteered to be tested for syphilis and HIV. She said she thinks the gift cards are a way of rewarding the community for healthy behavior rather than a form of bribery.

"It's just an added bonus," Toney said.

The effort was made at the end of August to do extensive screening in Forsyth County. The county needed more people and help, so POSSE was paired with the Rapid Intervention Outreach Team, allowing it to cover a larger area in a smaller amount of time. Both teams tested a combined total of 603 people in nine hours.

The teams of three included an interviewer, counselor and phlebotomist, a doctor who specializes in blood work. There was an initial briefing to ensure all 125 volunteers were equipped with the materials they needed.

A counselor supplied each tested person with information while the phlebotomist drew their blood, and the interviewer recorded demographic information. Toney said the process took about 10-15 minutes each.

"It's extremely successful anytime we can reach that amount of people," she said.

The organization has used incentives before and doesn't see a problem with continuing the trend. It has used cookouts at local churches, ice cream trucks and free haircuts to encourage the community to take responsibility.

Toney said people really want to know if they have any diseases, so they are glad POSSE cares and comes to them when they can't get to a facility.

It's all about "whatever we can (do to) be creative and help out," Toney said. "People are really grateful and driven by the incentive."

C. Timothy Monroe, director of Forsyth County's Department of Public Health, said unemployed people and those living in poverty are more likely to engage in sexually risky behavior.

Both Toney and Elon's medical director, Kitty Parish, said they are not sure economic status has anything to do with contracting diseases.

"You can't pinpoint exactly why," Toney said. "You can only assume people take more risks in hard times."

Jim Hawkins, an Elon university physician, said sex has been increasing since the late 1960s because of birth control pills.

Hawkins said he thinks using gift cards is a great tool to educate the community.

"I think any incentive is wonderful," he said.

Hawkins said anyone who is sexually active should get tested for HIV and STDs. More partners makes the probability of contracting a STD more likely.

"We've all heard the saying that you've slept with however many partners your partner has had," Hawkins said.

Health Services performs tests for HIV and many common STDs. It also provides antibiotics for other diseases.

Hawkins encourages students to go to www.ashastd.org for more information about preventing STDs and how to practice safe sex.

Hawkins and the rest of the Health Services staff offer many programs to raise awareness about STDs. They've reached out to health classes, fraternities, sororities and various other organizations on campus.

"Syphilis has been on the rise for a while," Hawkins said.

Health Services wants students to be informed, and there are many different ways to spread the word.

At Elon, the most prevalent STD is HPV. Herpes is the second most common STD, and chlamydia is the third. Syphilis cases on campus are rare, and Hawkins said if students do have the disease, it's usually from off-campus sources.

"The best way to prevent it," Hawkins said, "is to be in a monogamous relationship and use a condom."