

ECHO Script

Emergency and Community Health Outreach



Script: FINAL
Feb. 26, 2010

ECHO Show

"Understanding Vaccines"

Finalized Script Deadline: Friday, Feb. 26, 2010

Translation Deadline: Friday, March 5, 2010

Flesch-Kincaid grade reading level: ?? | Total words: 633

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In 2009, a new disease began making people sick, all around the world. The disease was H1N1 flu. H1N1 was a completely new kind of flu. It spread quickly, making people sick in many different countries.

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We were all told what to do to protect ourselves. Stay home if you're sick. Cover your nose and mouth if you cough or sneeze. Wash your hands thoroughly, and do it often.

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At first, we didn't have a vaccine for H1N1. When the vaccine did arrive, we didn't have enough of it. The first shipments were used to vaccinate people at highest risk from the flu. But eventually, we had enough for everybody. There's little question that the vaccine prevented disease, and saved lives.

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What happened with H1N1 is a reminder of just how important vaccines are.

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Vaccines have been around for a long time. They don't cure disease – but they do keep people from getting sick in the first place. They work by exposing your body to the germs that cause a particular disease.

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The germs in vaccines have been weakened or killed. They can't make you sick. But when your body is exposed to these germs, it learns to recognize them – and fight them.

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We have vaccines to prevent a long list of diseases – in people of all ages.

There are vaccines that protect teens and young children. There are also vaccinations that you need to get as an adult, and throughout your life, to protect yourself and your community. The flu vaccine is just one example.

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Thanks to vaccines, many of the diseases that used to make children sick are now rare. We seldom see children with diseases like polio, measles, whooping cough, mumps or chicken pox. These diseases used to sicken, disable, and kill thousands of children.

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Because children are no longer getting these diseases, people may believe that they are no longer a problem. But that's not true. If enough people in a particular community decide not to get vaccinated, these diseases can come back. Diseases like measles and whooping cough can start to make large numbers of people sick again.

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That's already happened in some places. Whole communities, cities and even countries have been affected. When that happens, even people who have been vaccinated may be at risk.

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There are always a few people who may not be protected by a particular vaccine. They can still become ill if an outbreak happens. That's why vaccination isn't just something you do to protect yourself, or your own family. Getting vaccinated protects your entire community.

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It's important to keep a record of the vaccinations you and your children have had. You may need it for school, child care, and even some jobs. The clinic where you get your vaccinations can help you do that.

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Some people may also have concerns about the safety of vaccines. If people aren't getting sick, they may think that getting vaccinated isn't worth the risk. But all vaccines are thoroughly tested – and licensed for use by the federal government.

There are also systems for reporting and keeping track of any possible problems with vaccines. And action is taken quickly if any problems arise.

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Getting vaccinated is one of the most important things you can do for your health. It can protect you, your family and your community against disease. It's safe, and it works. Vaccinations are available at low cost. Find out what vaccinations you need – and how to get them.

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Ask your doctor, your clinic, or city or county health department for more information.