

# TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

## Health panel gives answers on H1N1

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By: Elizabeth Mack

State health officials are reminding Florida residents about how to protect themselves from the H1N1 flu virus by discussing general information about vaccinations and treatments.

Wednesday morning at the WFSU-TV studios, a live Webcast was shown on [www.myflusafety.com](http://www.myflusafety.com) called "H1N1: Spread the Word, Not the Flu."

"This is a critical time where we need to remind people that the vaccination is here and where they can get it," said Doc Kokol, DOH spokesman. "Flu season usually peaks in February and programs like this are being produced as a reminder. We are really asking people to get vaccinated to protect themselves and the community."

The hour-long panel discussion featured Dr. Ana Viamonte Ros, Florida Surgeon General, Dr. Shairi Turner, Deputy Department of Health secretary for health and director of the office of Minority Health, and Dr. Russell Eggert, DOH Office of Public Health Preparedness.

The airing began at 11 a.m. with host Art Carlson, asking the panelists questions such as, how do you know if you have H1N1?, Can you get the flu from the vaccine?, how is the virus transmitted?, what should my physician do? and what treatments are available after contracting the virus?

Turner said the virus is transmitted through "respiratory droplets" that spray from the mouth when sneezing or coughing. Thus, coughing or sneezing into the arm is suggested, because the droplets can spread great distance and can sit on surfaces for two hours.

"There's always an opportunity to come down with the flu," Turner said. "Anytime of the year you can get it, it's just a matter of who you come in contact with. It could be someone who hasn't had full blown symptoms, and you'll get it."

Ros admitted that the vaccine was produced fairly quickly, but it's still safe and highly recommended.

For those who missed Wednesday's Webcast, it will be available for viewing today at [www.myflusafety.com](http://www.myflusafety.com).