

Flu season is far from over, and nasty viruses have the potential to pick up the pace and invade homes, schools and child cares.

“A second dose of H1N1 flu vaccine is recommended for children under 10,” said Dr. Joann Schaefer, Chief Medical Officer for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). “We know kids not only spread the flu but they’re more susceptible to complications. It’s important for children who’ve already received their first dose of H1N1 vaccine to get that second shot in the arm or spray in the nose to make sure they achieve full immunity.”

The H1N1 virus has been harder on children. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 289 flu-related child deaths were reported nationwide from April through December of 2009.

Health officials say almost all kids can benefit from getting the H1N1 vaccine, especially those under two years old and those with chronic health conditions.

The nasal spray vaccine is a great option for children who are afraid of needles. It’s available for healthy kids two years old and up.

If children haven’t received any H1N1 flu vaccine yet, it’s not too late.

To get a child vaccinated against H1N1 flu, contact his/her health care provider or the local health department. For a list of local health departments go to <http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/puh/oph/lhd.htm>.

Health officials say an adult who has children or works with children should be vaccinated too. That includes parents, grandparents and other relatives, child care providers, teachers and health care providers.

More vaccination questions? Call the local health department or the DHHS Flu Information Hotline at 1-888-541-5668 or 402-471-2579. Specialists are available to assist Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Central time. For more flu information, visit the DHHS Web site at www.dhhs.ne.gov/influenza.