



News Release

***Prevention, Protection, Promotion
Daggett, Duchesne and Uintah Counties***

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS)

Can I Develop GBS from H1N1 Vaccine?

Vernal, UT- November 10, 2009

Guillain-Barré Syndrome is a rare disorder in which a person's own immune system damages the nerves, causing muscle weakness and sometimes paralysis. Symptoms may last for a few weeks, or in some cases, several months. Most people recover fully from GBS, but some people have permanent nerve damage. In rare cases, individuals have died as a result of weakness in breathing muscles.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about two-thirds of people who develop GBS do so after having been sick with diarrhea or a lung or sinus illness. An infection with the bacteria, campulobacter jejuni, which can cause diarrhea, is one of the most common illnesses linked to GBS. Although rare, people can also get GBS after having experienced influenza or other infections such as Epstein Barr. Except for the swine flu vaccine used in 1976, no other influenza vaccines have been clearly linked to GBS.

While anyone can develop GBS, it is most common in adults, with those individuals over 50 years of age being 2-3 times more likely to develop GBS than younger people. Every year in the U.S., about 140 people develop GBS every week. Many studies have been performed to determine if influenza vaccines may cause GBS, but as a general rule, no link was found. Becoming ill from influenza far outweighs the chances of developing GBS due to vaccination from either seasonal or 2009 H1N1 influenzas.

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