

Study dispels concerns about drive-thru flu clinics

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Critics have pointed to fainting risks and subsequent auto accidents as reasons for concern when using drive-thru influenza immunization clinics, according to Ruth Carrico, PhD, RN, FSHEA, CIC, associate professor, division of infectious diseases, University of Louisville School of Medicine.

A review conducted by Carrico and UofL faculty W. Paul McKinney, MD, FACP, Timothy Wiemkan, PhD, MPH, CIC and John Myers, PhD, MSPH found these fears to be unfounded. Since the beginning of an annual drive-thru immunization program initiated 1995 at the University of Louisville Hospital, more than 50,000 doses of the [influenza vaccine](#) have been administered, with no reports of fainting episodes or related auto accidents. The study, Drive-thru [influenza](#) immunization: Fifteen years of experience published recently in the *Journal of Emergency Management*.

"Some experts in the field have placed their fears about fainting risks ahead of fact, and we wanted to dispel the myths," Carrico said. "We have created safe drive-thru processes that we feel lead to safer communities."

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)'s (CDC) vaccine reference book, Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine-Preventable Diseases mentions fainting as a risk of influenza inoculation. The CDC's information is probably focused on a more traditional setting and doesn't account for a drive-thru setting where recipients stay seated and are

already in a familiar setting, the study notes.

Carrico and her team reviewed medical and legal literature and made statistical inferences about the likelihood of fainting following drive-thru immunizations.

"We found a person's chance of fainting during a drive-thru vaccination is less than the probability of being struck by lightning," she said.

This summer, Carrico plans to release a toolkit about how communities can develop drive-thru immunization clinics. It will include information on how to organize a clinic, how to train and orient staff, how to set-up the clinic and how to evaluate the success. The toolkit will point to experiences and lessons learned from the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic and will be available through the UofL Center for Health Hazards Preparedness website: www.publichealthtools.com

"We hope the toolkit will increase the capacity and infrastructure of the nation to administer immunization or other emergency countermeasures quickly, efficiently and safely," Carrico said.

More information: The article's abstract is available on-line: [pnpcsw.pnpco.com/cadmus/testvo ... ear=2012&journal=jem](http://pnpcsw.pnpco.com/cadmus/testvo...ear=2012&journal=jem)

Provided by University of Louisville

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