

GERALD M. THORNTON
Freeholder

KEVIN L. THOMAS, M.A.
Health Officer
Public Health Coordinator

JOSEPH R. TORDELLA, D.O.
Medical Director

CAPE MAY COUNTY DEPARTMENT of HEALTH

4 Moore Road
Cape May Court House, N.J. 08210-1601
(609) 463-6689
Fax: (609) 463-6580



Preparing for Novel Influenza A (H1N1) Vaccination – Fall 2009

Dear Parents:

The Cape May County Department of Health has been working with the State Health Department and the CDC to respond to the novel influenza A (H1N1) pandemic over the summer and to prepare for the fall. While it is difficult to predict what any year's flu season will look like, we are anticipating more illness from the new influenza than what we saw in the spring, and more school-based outbreaks because influenza is typically transmitted more easily in fall and winter.

The Department of Health will be working closely with your child's school to monitor flu-like illness and any unusual clusters of illness. The CDC recommends that all children 6 months through 18 years of age receive an annual flu vaccine. Because the novel H1N1 virus is affecting primarily children and young adults, children are a priority group to receive the novel H1N1 vaccine as well. Your child may be recommended to receive two or more flu vaccines this year. The novel H1N1 vaccine will be very much like seasonal flu vaccines, which have a very good safety profile. You are encouraged to discuss flu vaccination with your child's physician.

The Department of Health will continue to offer free seasonal flu vaccinations for all children at the Department of Health and for children 16 years and older at our drive-through flu clinic. These clinics are planned for September and October. Check our website www.cmchealth.net or call our hotline (463-6581) for more information and clinic times.

Since children are a priority group to receive the novel H1N1 flu vaccine, the Department of Health is considering free flu vaccination clinics at your child's school. The timing of the clinics will depend on vaccine delivery, but will likely begin in November. Parental consent will be requested, and if granted, your child may receive an H1N1 flu vaccine during the normal school day. You are welcome to accompany your child when he or she is vaccinated. Additionally, certain schools will have extended hours after school ends, and you can opt to take your child to the clinic at that time.

There are steps you and your child should take to prevent the spread of influenza:

1. Ensure that your child washes his/her hands frequently with soap and warm water (or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if hands aren't visibly soiled).
2. Teach your child to cough or sneeze into a tissue or the sleeve, not their hands! Tissues should be immediately thrown in the trash and hands should be washed.
3. Keep your child home when sick. If your child has flu-like symptoms (fever, cough, sore throat, headache, body aches), do not send your child back to school for at least 24 hours after the fever is gone. While sick, keep your child away from others as much as possible.

Your child's school should provide time for students to wash their hands and have tissues available. Information about seasonal and novel H1N1 influenza can be found at www.cmchealth.net. The Department of Health looks forward to working with you and your child's school this fall to prevent the spread of influenza.

Sincerely,

Kevin L. Thomas, MA, HO
Public Health Coordinator
Cape May County Department of Health

Cc: Kim Cervantes, MA, MPH, CIC, Epidemiologist