



THE PUBLIC HEALTH CONNECTION



Published by Clinton County Health Department

Paula Galkins-Lacombe— Director of Public Health

Public Health
1930 - 2009 Edition

SPECIAL 2009 H1N1 EDITION

Reminder: If you have not already done so, please visit the HEALTH ALERT NETWORK (HAN) today! Here you will find resources and information to help you plan for 2009 H1N1 emergency preparedness.

UPDATE

H1N1 vaccine target groups may be changing over the next couple weeks; providers will remain a priority but as times goes on the desire for vaccine may wane leaving the community with less than optimum herd immunity. CDC - ACIP (Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices) cautioned the public health community that waiting too long to open up the target groups could lead to this situation. CCHD will work with providers in the efforts to immunize high risk yet increase the community's overall herd immunity.



Recommended Use of Influenza A (H1N1) 2009 Monovalent Vaccine

ACIP recommends that vaccination efforts should focus initially on persons in five target groups. These members of target groups are at higher risk for influenza or influenza-related complications and are likely to come in contact with influenza viruses as part of their occupation and could transmit influenza viruses to others.

Target groups are:

- pregnant women
- persons who live with or provide care for infants aged <6 months (e.g., parents, siblings, and daycare providers)
- health-care and emergency medical services personnel
- persons aged 6 months to 24 years
- persons aged 25--64 years who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications.

For more information :

www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr58e0821a1.htm

Vaccine Recommendations in Suspected H1N1 Cases

With the arrival of H1N1 vaccine and the continued numbers of probable cases in Clinton County, many people are confused about whether or not to get the vaccine for themselves or their children.

While many cases are suspect or probable when diagnosed based on case definition, it is important to remember that the only way to confirm a case of H1N1 influenza is by RT-PCR testing.

Many patients leave the office confused about the meaning of rapid influenza testing. It is important to ensure that the patient/parent is aware that this testing does not **confirm** H1N1 and discuss the continued importance of vaccination.

Anyone that has not had a **laboratory confirmed case of H1N1** should still receive the H1N1 vaccine when it is available to them.

For more information about vaccine distribution:

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/planners.htm>

Thimerisol vs Thimerisol-free vaccine in pregnancy

By now you are all aware that the above mentioned section of the Public Health Law states that beginning July 1, 2008 providers are required to administer Thimerosal-free vaccine to children under the age of 3 and to pregnant women. Recently Commissioner Daines issued a brief regarding the use of influenza vaccine that contains Thimerosal.

Health Care Providers are expected to exhaust all reasonable avenues with regard to procuring the appropriate influenza vaccine. With shortages and low supplies of both seasonal and H1N1 vaccine it may not be possible to acquire vaccine that meets the standards set forth in PHL § 2112. If they are not able to acquire any, they can vaccinate their patients with available vaccine.

The benefits of vaccination against influenza are widely known and far out weight the risks of vaccinating using a vaccine containing a small dose of Thimerosal. Providers should reassure the pregnant patient regarding the lack of evidence to support the dangers of the preservative when administered during pregnancy.



Fever Reducers, to Use or Not to Use

An article published in the October 17th issue of the *Lancet* reports on a study that suggests that there is a connection between the use of acetaminophen and decreased immune response to vaccinations in children. There may be a link between the effectiveness of the body's ability to mount an immune response and the absence of fever and inflammation during that response. Since both fever and inflammation are essential pieces in the process by which immunity is created, there is concern that removing these following vaccine administration will make the vaccine less effective.

If there is indeed a link, it may be prudent to advise patients to avoid the use of acetaminophen routinely where vaccinations are concerned. Providing patients with information regarding fevers, reactions, when to administer medications to reduce fever/pain and when to contact the child's physician should replace the routine guidance encouraging parents to administer acetaminophen prior to vaccination.



Useful Web Links:

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/professional.htm>

<http://www.nyalert.gov/>



Are you a medical professional in Clinton County? If so, we want you!!

Clinton County Medical Reserve Corp is a group of local, licensed, medical professionals who are dedicated to helping their community. Members are students, nurses, doctors, AEMTs and other members of the medical community. Active or retired, if you have a desire to play an integral role in the health and well-being of your community, the CCMRC is the place for you! For More information, or to Join please visit us @ <http://www.clintoncountygov.com/>
Or call 565-4848.

Did You Know?

Effective October 1, 2009 Medicaid has increased the reimbursement rates for children under the age of 19. Providers operating under Article 28 and office-based providers should be receiving \$17.85 per administration rather than the regular MA reimbursement rate of \$13.23. For more information visit the New York State Department of Health's website at http://www.health.state.ny.us/health_care/medicaid/program/update/2009/2009-10spec.htm.



Providers: If you are ordering H1N1 vaccine for your practice, please visit our H1N1 provider web page for the most up-to-date information on how to place your vaccine orders.

Antivirals to Become Available from SNS

According to a letter released 11/30/2009 by Robert Burhans, Director of the Office of Health Emergency Preparedness for NYS, the State Health Department is preparing to distribute some of the Tamiflu and Relenza currently being held within the state's Strategic National Stockpile.

The release of these medications will be to help provide treatment and prophylaxis to people with minimal to no insurance. Dispensers will be entitled to charge a \$5.00 administration fee if the patient can afford it and providers will not be allowed to bill insurance companies for the cost of the medication.

For more information regarding this program, e-mail questions to NYSAntivirals@health.state.ny.us

Clinton County does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, religion, or disability in employment or the provision of services.

**Clinton County Health Department
Health Services Unit
133 Margaret Street
Plattsburgh, NY 12901
Tel: (518) 565-4848
Fax: (518) 565-4821
Information Line: (518) 565-4490
www.clintonhealth.org**