

H1N1 Influenza Update for Gloucester County Residents

Week of November 2nd, 2009

The Gloucester County Department of Health and Senior Services is continuing to offer H1N1 (Swine) flu vaccine. At this time the health department will be offering the H1N1 vaccine to individuals in certain target populations. People in these populations have been identified as being more vulnerable to complications from the swine flu than other populations.

The next scheduled clinic is specifically for those who have household contact and/or are caregivers for infants younger than 6 months of age. Younger infants are at higher risk of influenza-related complications and cannot be vaccinated. Persons eligible to receive the vaccine from this target group include parents or guardians, siblings or other household contacts living with a child under the age of 6 months. Caregivers are eligible to receive the vaccine if they provide hands on care to children under the age of 6 months.

At this point H1N1 vaccine in Gloucester County is very limited. Vaccine across the state and country is also very limited. Gloucester County remains committed to vaccinating those that are most vulnerable and will expand the more groups as vaccine is available.

What else is Gloucester County doing to keep our residents safe and informed:

- In September the Gloucester County Department of Health performed exercises with 3 school districts in preparation for in- school vaccination clinics.
- The Gloucester County Department of Health has met with every school district to discuss plans to vaccinate school aged children. Many Gloucester County children will be able to receive vaccine in their school or sending district soon.
- A Hotline has been established to provide information to the public. At this point we have received more than 4,000 calls related to seasonal and H1N1 influenza. The hotline number is: (856) 218 – 4141.
- H1N1 vaccination clinics have been offered to medically fragile children up to the age of 18, infants and toddlers under the age of 5, pregnant women, and emergency response healthcare workers. The Gloucester County Department of Health has also distributed vaccine to many healthcare providers throughout the county so that their employees with direct patient care may be vaccinated.
- The Gloucester County Department of Health has hosted more than 30 community presentations on H1N1 to various organizations and public entities.
- The Gloucester County Department of Health is in constant communication with the local hospitals to determine the severity of illness in our county. At this point there is an increase in individuals presenting to the emergency room, but very few hospital admissions for influenza like illness. We encourage individuals with mild illness to remain at home, stay hydrated, practice good hand hygiene and cover coughs and sneezes. Only those people who are seriously ill should seek medical attention from the emergency room.