

New Jersey Dept. of Health and Senior Services
Public Information – Update 17

Date: November 10, 2009

Time: 3:00 PM

H1N1 Influenza and Vaccination Program

H1N1 SIGNS / SYMPTOMS / SEVERITY

[NEW] What medical complications can arise as a result of the flu?

Most people who get the flu (either seasonal or 2009 H1N1) will have mild illness, will not need medical care or antiviral drugs, and will recover in less than two weeks. Some people, however, are more likely to get flu complications that result in being hospitalized and occasionally result in death. Pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus infections and ear infections are examples of flu-related complications. The flu can also make chronic health problems worse. For example, people with asthma may experience asthma attacks while they have the flu, and people with chronic congestive heart failure may have worsening of this condition that is triggered by the flu.

H1N1 TRANSMISSION / INFECTIVITY

[NEW] Why are some hospitals not allowing children to visit their relatives in the hospitals?

There are several reasons why health care facilities, such as hospitals and nursing homes, are not allowing children to visit. The 2009 H1N1 flu virus has infected children much more than the adult population. In addition, it is very easily spread by children. Therefore, the facility does not want to have infected children (who may or may not yet be sick) spread the flu to patients and staff. In addition, they are concerned that children who are exposed to their flu patients can become infected and spread it to others in the community.

H1N1 VACCINE

[NEW] How long after I get a flu vaccine will I be immune to the flu virus?

Flu vaccines cause antibodies to develop in the body. These antibodies provide protection against infection with the viruses that are in the vaccine. Once you get vaccinated, your body makes protective antibodies in about two weeks. In the meantime, you are still at risk for getting the flu. In addition, children younger than 10 years old who are being vaccinated against 2009 H1N1 flu for the first time need a second dose 4 or more weeks later in order to be protected. While some protection is offered after the first dose, maximum protection is reached within two weeks after the second dose.

[NEW] My child is due for a 2nd dose and I'm being told that he has to wait because the limited amount of vaccine needs to go to other children who have not yet had their 1st dose. If my child gets the 2nd dose more than 4 weeks after the 1st one, how does that affect his protection against the flu? Is my child protected against the flu with just one dose?

The span of 4 weeks between doses is a minimum time. The 2nd dose can be given after 4 weeks and still result in the same level of protection for your child. With just one dose, your child is

partially protected against the flu. It is recommended that your child obtains the 2nd dose when it becomes available.

H1N1 VACCINE PRIORITY GROUPS

[UPDATED] I'm in a priority group and no one can tell me when I'll be able to get H1N1 vaccine. Why am I'm getting the run-around?

I can understand your frustration and I am really sorry about it. We're all frustrated with both the delay in making the vaccine and not knowing when it will be available. The problem is that the distribution of the vaccine supply is handled by the federal government and the company they contract with for shipping. *We cannot predict when additional vaccine will become available to our providers within NJ.* Providers who order vaccine do not receive advance notice about when they will receive their shipments or what the shipments will contain. Some providers may be getting much less vaccine than they ordered because there is not enough vaccine available right now. *We are asking that everyone continue to be patient as more vaccine continues to be delivered to providers every day.*

ADDITIONAL H1N1 INFORMATION/RESOURCES

Where can I learn more?

The CDC website will be providing daily updates regarding the status of this flu investigation in the US. They also have information posted such as questions and answers regarding Novel Influenza A (H1N1).

The web address is: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/.

For NJ information, go to: <http://www.nj.gov/health/flu/h1n1/>