

COUNTY OF MORRIS
DEPARTMENT OF LAW & PUBLIC SAFETY
OFFICE OF HEALTH MANAGEMENT

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October 30, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As I am sure you are aware, Morris County's Local Health Departments have begun to offer the H1N1 vaccine at community clinics throughout Morris County. The ongoing collaboration between your local Health Department and your School District continues to ensure that the health needs of all students are most appropriately addressed. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend vaccination against the H1N1 flu for:

- Pregnant women
- Household contacts and caregivers of children younger than 6 months of age
- All persons 6 months to 24 years of age
- Healthcare and Emergency Medical Personnel
- Persons age 24 to 64 years old who have a health condition associated with higher risk of medical complications from the flu

Vaccination is the best way to protect against H1N1 flu and we encourage everyone in the CDC's target group to get vaccinated. The Morris County Office of Health Management website at www.morrishealth.org will be updated regularly with the latest clinic dates throughout Morris County. Because the vaccine is part of a national program, there are no residency restrictions and you are free to receive a vaccination from any public clinic in the State of New Jersey. In addition 130 private medical practices have registered to receive H1N1 vaccine, so please check with your primary care physician to see if vaccine is available. Our website will also have a list of pharmacies and private practices that will accept non-patients for vaccination. Please note that while encouraged, **vaccination is voluntary.**

While H1N1 vaccine is limited to the CDC's high risk group initially, we anticipate that vaccine will be available for all people in the future. CDC has advised us that enough vaccine will be manufactured to allow everyone who wishes to be vaccinated.

Besides vaccine, there are effective methods of prevention that help minimize risk of illness. Good hygiene habits such as washing your hands thoroughly and frequently with soap and water prevents the spread of illness. Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue that is thrown away is also important. If your child is sick, please keep them home. If your child has influenza-like illness, which includes fever, cough, and/or sore throat please keep your child home and report the absence to your school.

Should you have specific questions we encourage you to call your local Health Department. Rest assured that your school and local Health Department continue to work together with Morris County officials to minimize the risk to your children.

Sincerely,
Peter Summers
Peter Summers
Morris County Health Officer