

HEALTH HAPPENINGS

INFLUENZA UPDATE

NOVEMBER 30, 2009

Sussex County Department of Environmental and Public Health Services will hold their next 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine clinic on December 6, 2009 at Sussex County Community College. The clinic will open at 9 a.m. and will offer **only** 2009 H1N1 nasal spray flu vaccine for the following priority groups:

1. Healthy children and young adults between the ages of 2 and 24
2. Healthy people between 25-49 years old who are
 - Healthcare/emergency medical services personnel
 - Household contacts/caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age.

Children under the age of 10 who have already received their **first** 2009 H1N1 flu vaccination, and were vaccinated on or before November 8th, can receive their **second** dose at this clinic.

Registration will open on Monday, November 30, 2009 for the priority groups referenced above, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Those interested in receiving the vaccine will be able to make their own appointment by visiting the County's Flu website, at www.sussex.nj.us/flu, and following the directions. A confirmation page for the appointment can be printed once the required information has been entered. It is strongly recommended that you visit our website to make your appointment. Individuals without internet access can contact the Sussex County Department of Environmental and Public Health Services, at 973-579-0570 from 8-4:30 p.m., for assistance. You **must** make an appointment in order to attend the clinic and no walk-ins will be permitted. The information and directions for registration are posted on our website, at www.sussex.nj.us/flu. If you have underlying health conditions or questions about your personal health, please contact your health care provider to discuss your concerns about the 2009 H1N1 Flu Vaccine.

Over the past week (Nov. 23) we have noticed an increase in the number of children absent and also an increase in the number of children being sent home. While the numbers seem high, they are still well within the % acceptable by the Sussex County Health Department. This pattern of illness is not confined to Montague, as many of the school districts in the county are experiencing the same. Although there are classes with 4 or more students absent, the absentees are not all because of the same illness, much less influenza. We are monitoring it very closely.

Children are absent for a variety of reasons including upper respiratory infections, ear infections, croup, intestinal virus, conjunctivitis, injuries and the common cold virus. Only 3 students in our school have been definitively diagnosed with influenza type A. Others are absent with influenza-like illnesses. Both the seasonal virus and H1N1 have the same symptoms and are treated the same. Hence doctors are not testing unless a child has a chronic illness which would complicate his/her recovery. Most of our students do not fall into this category.

In the meantime, continue to impress upon your children the preventative measures that everyone should follow to maintain good health and hygiene:

1. Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing. If a tissue is not available, cough into your elbow or sleeve, not your hands. Throw away the tissue after using it.
2. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. A hand sanitizer is a 2nd line of defense if soap and water are not available.
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands.
4. Avoid close contact with sick people.
5. Stay home if you or your children are ill. **Do not return to work or school until you or your child has been without a fever (over 100 degrees) for 24 hours, without the use of medication.**
6. Families and individuals should take the opportunity to create, review and update their family emergency plans. A contingency plan should be in place that would provide for a babysitter to stay home with a sick child in case a parent must return to work before the child is well. **Children should not be sent to school after a morning dose of analgesic, i.e. Tylenol or Motrin, to allow a parent to return to work before the child is really better.**
7. Anyone who is experiencing flu-like symptoms: fever over 100 degrees and a cough, and/or a sore throat, which is not attributed to a known cause, such as strep throat, should contact their healthcare provider.
8. Be pro-active and consider getting both the general fall flu shot, as well as the H1N1 flu shot, when they become available.
9. Drink plenty of water or other liquids.
10. Get sufficient sleep (10 hours for elementary school children).
11. Use lotion to keep skin from drying and cracking. Apply lip balm on lips.
12. Dress for the weather to keep up your resistance to germs and bacteria.
13. Do not share glasses, cups, utensils, food and beverages.
14. When possible, sanitize your kitchen and bathroom with a disinfectant, such as chlorine bleach.
15. Humidify bedroom air or keep a window slightly open when sleeping.

An antiviral medication can be prescribed by a physician should anyone in your home contract the flu. It will lessen symptoms and reduce the risk of complications if taken within 48 hours after flu symptoms begin. Please notify the Health Office if your child has flu-like symptoms so that the incidence of influenza at school can be monitored.

The Sussex County Department of Environmental and Public Health Services have trained staff, emergency response plans and protocols in place to respond to public health emergencies such as a possible H1N1 epidemic. The Sussex County website has the most current information about influenza available and links to both the CDC and NJDHSS at www.sussex.nj.us.

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE COMMON COLD AND THE FLU

COLD

1. Sore throat
2. Sneezing, sniffing
3. Cough and runny nose
4. Mild fever (100-101)
5. Mild body aches

INFLUENZA

1. Sore throat, headache
2. Fatigue
3. Cough and congestion
4. Higher fever (>101)
5. Body aches and soreness
6. Vomiting and diarrhea

HEALTH SCREENINGS

Health screenings are complete except for absent students who will be screened sometime in the next week. Parents will only be notified if their child is deficient in any area. Letters regarding deficiencies in height, weight and/or body mass will be mailed home in January. Deficiency letters regarding vision, hearing and/or blood pressure will be mailed home within a few days of the screening.

DENTAL EXAMS IN FEBRUARY

It is not too early to start thinking about our school dental examination days in February. We have set 2/2/10 and 2/3/10 for the Mobile Dentists to visit our school. This is an easy way for your child to receive their dental screening, cleanings and fluoride treatments.....at school! (When applicable, x-rays and sealants are also offered). The Smile Program's team will set up a mini-dental office in our building and can provide preventive services for all children who return completed forms. The Smile Program can provide these services to families who need financial assistance and it has subsidized fees for those who choose to pay for the preventive care. Children with Medicaid are welcomed and encouraged to join it. Every student who participates will receive a shiny smile and a new toothbrush. You can learn more about Smile Programs....the mobile dentists by going to its website: www.mobiledentists.com and watching the short video about the preventive dental care program. Permission forms will be sent home the first week of January.