

Ulster County Weekly H1N1 Update - Released: 23 –Dec. 09

**Ulster County Health Department
Seasonal and H1N1 Influenza Advisory
Update 12/23/09**

Influenza Monitoring:

The Ulster County Health Department (UCHD) has noted a slight increase from the previous week of Influenza Like Illness (ILI) monitoring in Ulster County. Hospital Emergency Departments reported minor increases in the number of patients seen with ILI last week. Absenteeism from ILI in Ulster County schools also slightly increased last week but are still within a range that is not unusual for this time of year. UCHD is continuing to monitor influenza activity on a daily basis.

There remains a possibility of a third wave of the 2009 H1N1 influenza because some previous pandemics have included a third wave. Any influenza is unpredictable, just as the 2009 H1N1 has been.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that almost all of the influenza viruses identified so far continue to be 2009 H1N1 influenza A viruses. These viruses remain similar to the virus chosen for the 2009 H1N1 vaccine, and remain susceptible to the antiviral drugs oseltamivir and zanamivir with rare exception.

Status of Prevention Efforts:

Flu Vaccination Information:

Ulster County Public Vaccination Clinics: The Ulster County Health Department had a successful week of H1N1 Clinics, vaccinating over 1,400 individuals at five clinics throughout the county. Future clinics will be announced and are planned for January 2010.

Where to Find Vaccine: If your provider has not ordered H1N1 vaccine, and does not plan to order H1N1 vaccine, call the Ulster County Health Department Flu Hotline at 845-340-3093 or log onto www.UlsterCountyNY.gov/health to get updated information about when vaccination clinics for the general public will be held. You can also check <http://www.flucliniclocator.org/> to see if there are any flu vaccine clinics scheduled near you.

Voluntary non-safety –related recall of specific lots of nasal spray vaccine for 2009 H1N1 influenza-Questions and Answers:

Why are some lots of the Influenza A (H1N1) 2009 Monovalent Vaccine Live, Intranasal being recalled from use?

As part of its quality assurance program, the manufacturer of the nasal spray monovalent H1N1 flu vaccine, MedImmune, performs routine, ongoing stability testing of its influenza A (H1N1) vaccine during the vaccine's "shelf life", that is after the vaccine has been shipped to providers until its expiration date. Stability testing means measuring the strength (also called potency) of vaccine over time to make sure it does not go down below the pre-specified limit. On December 16 and 21, the manufacturer notified CDC and FDA that the potency of 13 batches (called "lots") of nasal spray vaccine had fallen slightly below a pre-specified limit may fall below that pre-specified limit in the upcoming weeks. The slight decrease in potency should not affect how the vaccine works. However, MedImmune is sending providers directions for returning any unused vaccine from these lots.

What does potency mean for the nasal spray H1N1 vaccine?

Potency (or strength) is determined by the measurement of the concentration of the active component in the H1N1 vaccine.

Are there any concerns about safety of vaccines from these lots?

No. There are no safety concerns with these lots of H1N1 vaccine. All lots successfully passed pre-release testing for safety, purity and potency.

Should people who received vaccines from these lots be revaccinated?

No. The vaccine potency is only slightly below what it is supposed to be. The vaccine in these lots is still expected to be effective in stimulating a protective response. There is no need to re-administer a dose to those who received vaccine from these lots.

For additional information about H1N1 and updates, visit our website at: www.UlsterCountyNY.gov/health or call seasonal flu hotline: 340-3093. Also visit <http://www.flucliniclocator.org/> to see if there are any flu vaccine clinics scheduled at locations near you or call NYS DOH Hotline 1-800-808-1987.