

Ulster County Weekly H1N1 Update - Summary Released: 30 –Oct. 09

- The Ulster County Health Department (UCHD) is seeing considerably increased levels of influenza-like illness (ILI) reported by health care providers, Emergency Departments, schools and colleges in Ulster County.
- Last week we received reports of lab confirmed influenza A and influenza 2009 H1N1 cases among Ulster County residents.
- Numerous schools have reported clusters of ILI among students and have taken appropriate infection control measures.
- Some Health Care Providers (HCPs) received small amounts of the H1N1 vaccine last week that had been ordered through the NYS Department of Health (NYS DOH).
- H1N1 vaccine supplies continue to be markedly limited due to production delays. It is expected that the flow of H1N1 vaccine will increase by mid-November.
- The UCHD has planned community mass vaccination clinics when more H1N1 vaccine is available. The department will widely promote the dates and locations of public H1N1 vaccination clinics as soon as adequate vaccine supply is available.
- There continues to be a delay in receipt of seasonal flu vaccine. Last week the CDC reported that there might not be an adequate supply of seasonal flu vaccine to meet the increased demand.
- There appears to be a need for accurate information about the H1N1 vaccine so that individuals who will benefit significantly from vaccination will not be hesitant to receive it based upon incorrect information.
 - The 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine is produced using the same process in the same facilities by the same manufacturers as the seasonal influenza vaccine.
 - The 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine was tested in clinical trials, which evaluate the vaccine for any safety risks, similar to testing used for seasonal influenza vaccine.
 - To date there have been no reports of any unusual or increased side effects from the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine.
- It can not be emphasized enough that vaccination offers the best protection against getting sick from influenza, both seasonal influenza and 2009 H1N1 influenza.

For additional information about H1N1 and updates, visit our website at: www.UlsterCountyNY.gov/health or call seasonal flu hotline: 340-3093. <http://www.flucliniclocator.org/> to see if there are any seasonal flu vaccine clinics scheduled at retail outlets near you.

Ulster County Health Department
Seasonal and H1N1 Influenza Advisory Update
10/30/09

Influenza Monitoring:

The Ulster County Health Department (UCHD) is seeing considerably increased levels of influenza-like illness (ILI) reported by health care providers, Emergency Departments, schools and colleges in Ulster County. Last week we received reports of lab confirmed influenza A and influenza 2009 H1N1 cases among Ulster County residents. Numerous schools have reported clusters of ILI among students and have taken appropriate infection control measures. UCHD is continuing to monitor influenza activity on a daily basis. Nationally, the H1N1 influenza virus continues to be the dominant flu virus circulating at this time. Forty-six states are reporting widespread influenza activity. In New York State, influenza activity is considered to be widespread. In Ulster County, a number of schools are reporting marked increases in absenteeism due to influenza-like illness. Emergency departments have reported increased visits due to respiratory and influenza-like illness.

Status of Prevention Efforts:

Flu Vaccination Information: Some Health Care Providers (HCPs) received small amounts of the H1N1 vaccine last week that had been ordered through the NYS Department of Health (NYS DOH). The NYS DOH established a vaccine ordering process that went into effect last week that enabled registered providers to place vaccine orders. HCPs that placed orders for vaccine last week should receive a portion of their order this week. H1N1 vaccine supplies continue to be markedly limited due to production delays. It is expected that the flow of H1N1 vaccine will increase by mid-November.

The UCHD has planned community mass vaccination clinics when more H1N1 vaccine is available. The department will widely promote the dates and locations of public H1N1 vaccination clinics as soon as adequate vaccine supply is available.

There continues to be a delay in receipt of seasonal flu vaccine. Last week the CDC reported that there might not be an adequate supply of seasonal flu vaccine to meet the increased demand. It is good practice to call our seasonal Flu Hotline at (845) 340-3093 to hear the most current information regarding the schedule for future clinics. The information will also be posted on our website at www.UlsterCountyNY.gov/health.

Additionally, those interested should call their primary care physician and/or local pharmacy for information about where to get a flu shot or check <http://www.flucliniclocator.org> to see if there are any seasonal flu vaccine clinics scheduled at retail outlets near you.

Public Information: H1N1 Vaccine Safety: With the introduction of the new 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine there have been questions expressed about the safety of this new vaccine. There appears to be a need for accurate information about the H1N1 vaccine so that individuals who will benefit significantly from vaccination will not be hesitant to receive it based upon incorrect information. Thus, we are providing the following facts concerning the safety of the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine:

The 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine is produced using the same process in the same facilities by the same manufacturers as the seasonal influenza vaccine.

The 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine was tested in clinical trials, which evaluate the vaccine for any safety risks, similar to testing used for seasonal influenza vaccine.

There is considerable experience with seasonal influenza vaccine development and production. Many millions of seasonal influenza vaccine doses distributed using this technology have a long and successful track record of safety and effectiveness in the United States.

There are multiple systems in place to continue to closely monitor the safety of the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine as it is distributed and they will be able to quickly identify and evaluate any potential adverse reaction following receipt of the vaccination.

To date there have been no reports of any unusual or increased side effects from the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine.

It can not be emphasized enough that vaccination offers the best protection against getting sick from influenza, both seasonal influenza and 2009 H1N1 influenza. The side effects from H1N1 flu vaccine are expected to be similar to those from seasonal flu vaccines. The most common side effects following vaccination are expected to be mild, such as soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given. If these problems occur, they usually begin soon after the shot and may last as long as 1-2 days. Serious side effects after vaccination are very uncommon. The benefits of flu vaccination far outweigh any risks. Remember, a flu vaccine WILL NOT cause the flu illness.