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## Wishing All a Happy & Healthy Holiday Season

This will be our last H1N1 Flu Update of 2009.  
In the New Year we will resume this Update if needed.

### 2009 H1N1 FLU UPDATE: Friday, December 18, 2009

#### Staying Well for the Holidays

During the busy holiday season, social gatherings provide many new opportunities to spread illness and for people to get sick with the flu (or other respiratory illnesses). Therefore, we need to continue to do everything we can to help prevent illness and the potentially serious complications from the flu. In addition, a third wave of H1N1 flu could appear later this winter or spring. Therefore, we kindly remind everyone to follow these simple steps to stay healthy during the holidays and into the New Year.

1. **Vaccination** continues to offer the most effective protection against the flu. H1N1 vaccine is now available to everyone over the age of 6 months.
2. **Practice simple, common sense preventive actions** every day to decrease the spread of germs including:
  - Avoid close contact with people who have flu-like symptoms.
  - Cover your coughs and sneezes with either a tissue or with the elbow joint of your arm.
  - **Wash your hands often with soap and warm water** or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
  - Keep your hands away from your eyes, nose and mouth. That is how germs spread.
  - If you have a fever with a cough or sore throat, stay home until your symptoms have resolved and until you have been free of fever for at least one day without the use of fever-reducing medicines (i.e. Tylenol or Advil).
3. Take **antiviral medications** against influenza, if your doctor recommends them.

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

**Vaccine Recall:** Recently, in the news it was announced that one of the manufacturers of 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine, Sanofi Pasteur, recalled some of the vaccine used to vaccinate children aged 6-35 months.

This recall was done because during routine testing, it was noted that the strength of vaccine in these lots had decreased since initial distribution and was slightly below the specified range. Any unused doses that remain from these lots are being removed from circulation and sent back to the manufacturer.

**There are no safety concerns with the recalled vaccine.** All vaccines are routinely tested for purity, potency and safety prior to distribution. Despite a slight reduction in strength, the vaccine in these lots is still expected to produce an effective immune response. Therefore, there is no need to re-administer a dose in individuals who received this vaccine.

All children less than 10 years of age are recommended to receive two doses of H1N1 vaccine approximately one month apart for the optimal immune response. Parents of children who received vaccine from the recalled lots do not need to take any action, other than to complete the two-dose immunization series if not already completed. If both doses received were from the recalled lots, optimal protection from the H1N1 virus will still be achieved.

Several health care providers within Albany County have received doses from the lots that are being recalled. The **Albany County Department of Health has not used any doses of the recalled vaccine** at the public vaccination clinics that have been conducted.

## **FLU VACCINATION INFORMATION**

As of December 10<sup>th</sup>, the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine is being made available to all New Yorkers aged 6 months and older who want to be vaccinated, as the vaccine supply permits.

The Albany County Department of Health (ACHD) will continue to offer daily H1N1 vaccination clinics into January, on weekdays between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM at its location on 175 Green Street in Albany. These clinics are by appointment only for Albany County residents who are 6 months of age or older. Albany County residents can pre-register for an appointment either online at [www.albanycounty.com/health](http://www.albanycounty.com/health) or by phone at (518) 447-4505. Phones are open weekdays 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Please note the ACHD will be closed on December 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> as well as on January 1, 2010.

For updated information regarding future public clinics, please continue to check our website at [www.albanycounty.com/health](http://www.albanycounty.com/health).

In addition to our public vaccination clinics, you may be able to get the H1N1 vaccine at your doctor's office, as many providers are offering the H1N1 vaccine to their patients.

## **FLU SURVEILLANCE**

### Albany County Influenza Surveillance – Key Findings:

- » Flu activity continues to decrease in Albany County for the fourth consecutive week.
- » Last week, sentinel influenza physicians in NYS reported Influenza-like Illness (ILI) activity at 1.61%, which is below the baseline ILI activity level of 2.3% normally seen at this time of year. While NYS continued to report flu activity as widespread last week (because 43 counties reported at least one flu case) flu activity is expected to drop to the regional level soon.

» Wadsworth state lab reported its first two cases of seasonal flu for this season last week. One case of seasonal flu A H1N1 and one case of seasonal flu A H3N2 were reported. The lab also reported finding its second case of flu B for this season.

» Nationally, 14 states, including New York State, are reporting widespread influenza activity; a decline of 11 states over last week. Regional influenza activity was reported by 25 states, local influenza activity was reported by 7 states, and 4 states reported sporadic influenza activity. Additional information about flu surveillance in the U.S. is available from the CDC website FluView at [www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/).

If you would like to subscribe to or be removed from this list please e-mail [BeReady@AlbanyCounty.com](mailto:BeReady@AlbanyCounty.com) and insert "Remove from Weekly Update" in subject line.

More resources for more information about seasonal flu and H1N1 flu:

The Albany County Department of Health

[www.albanycounty.com/health](http://www.albanycounty.com/health)

Call Albany County's 24-hour automated flu hotline at (518) 447-4505

The New York State Department of Health H1N1 flu hotline at 1-800-808-1987

[www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)