

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CITY OF BAYONNE

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MARK A. SMITH
MAYOR



Fall/Winter 2009/2010

Dear Parent/Guardians:

As you may have heard, a new influenza virus, called the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus, was first identified in the United States in late April 2009. The virus has caused illness ranging from mild to severe, including hospitalizations and deaths in adults and children. In fact, the 2009 H1N1 virus is affecting children much more than adults. Many children have gotten 2009 H1N1 infection and there have been large outbreaks in some schools across the country. **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has recommended that children and young adults aged 6 months through 24 years be vaccinated against 2009 H1N1 as soon as the vaccine is available.** Other groups recommended to get the first available doses of the vaccine include:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- Health care and emergency medical services workers, and
- People ages 25 through 64 years who have certain health conditions that place them at higher risk for influenza-related complications

Vaccination is the best way to protect your child from this potentially serious disease. The Bayonne Health Department, in conjunction with Horizon Healthcare, is working with your child's school to give the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine to children at school. We will hold vaccination clinics beginning approximately mid-November. Your child's school will let you know the specific dates once vaccine is on hand. Information about the disease and the vaccine itself is included in this parent packet. We have also included a consent form that will include options allowing you to either accept or refuse the vaccination for your child. If you refuse, the vaccination will not be given to your child. We strongly encourage you to consent to the administration of this vaccine.

Children 10 and older will only need one dose. Children under the age of 10 are expected to need two doses of vaccine spaced about 21-28 days apart. There will be no cost to you for this vaccine.

We realize that some people have questions regarding H1N1 vaccine safety. As per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- The 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine has a similar safety profile as seasonal flu vaccines, which have very good safety track records.
- There were no "shortcuts" taken in the production of this vaccine. Production was not rushed and safety protocols have been maintained throughout the process.
- The 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine has not been associated with any unexpected adverse events (or unexpected side effects). In addition, the 2009-2010 seasonal influenza vaccines also have not been associated with any unexpected adverse events (or unexpected side effects).
- The types and frequencies of side effects from the 2009 H1N1 vaccine will likely be similar to those experienced following seasonal flu vaccine, which are mild, localized reactions.

Please visit the NJ State Department of Health's 2009 H1N1 influenza web site at <http://www.nj.gov/health/h1n1flu/> and also <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/parents> for information especially for parents. Your child's health care provider also can answer your questions about the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus. If you have any questions about the vaccine or the vaccination clinics, please call the H1N1 Bayonne Call Center at 201-858-6140. Members of the public seeking vaccine can visit the NJ State Department of Health website, mentioned above, and click on "Flu Shot Locator" to find 2009 H1N1 clinics.

Sincerely,

Mark A. Smith
Mayor

Patricia L. McGeehan, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Richard Censullo
Health Officer