



Douglas County Public Health

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

October 14, 2009

Dear Parents/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. 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 such as HIV, diabetes, or heart or lung disease.

Vaccination is the best way to protect your child from this potentially serious disease. Douglas County Public Health is working with your child's school to give the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine to children at school. We will hold vaccination clinics beginning this November, and your child's school will let you know the specific dates once vaccine is on hand. Included with this letter is more information about the disease and the vaccine. Also included is a 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.

Children age 9 and under are expected to need two doses of vaccine spaced about a month apart. There will be no cost to you for this vaccine if given at school. There may be an administration fee charged at other H1N1 vaccination clinics throughout the county, if you choose to take your child to one of those.

If you have any questions about the vaccine or the vaccination clinics, please call: Douglas County Public Health at 320-763-6018 from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday –Friday, or contact your school. You may want to visit the CDC's 2009 H1N1 influenza web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/> and also <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/parents> for information especially for parents. Your child's health care provider can also answer your questions about the regular seasonal influenza virus, the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus, and possibly administer both the seasonal and H1N1 influenza vaccine, depending on availability.

Sincerely,

Sandra L. Tubbs, PHN, Director
Douglas County Public Health