

## WESTFORD HEALTH DEPARTMENT

### Together, we can fight the flu.

This Sunday marks the beginning of the annual observance of National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW). This flu season has presented our community with a unique challenge to fight a new type of influenza -- the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus.



The H1N1 flu is a serious disease. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that between mid-April and November 14, 2009, 47 million people in the United States were infected with the 2009 H1N1 flu, more than 200,000 people were hospitalized, and over 9,800 people died.

Influenza is unpredictable and we do not know the likelihood of a future wave of H1N1 flu, but we do know that vaccination is the most important step in protecting against influenza. Protect your family and our community by keeping yourself and those close to you healthy; get yourself and your family vaccinated.

Our remaining January clinics scheduled for Westford residents are as follows:

#### H1N1 CLINICS FOR GENERAL POPULATION ABOVE 1 YEAR OLD

**Date:** Thursday January 21, 2010

**Time:** 4pm-7pm

**Location:** Millennium School  
Walk-in

**Date:** Tuesday January 26, 2010

**Time:** By appointment only- Call 978 692-5509 to book

**Location:** Millennium School

Whether protecting yourself from H1N1 or seasonal flu please continue to follow the simple, yet effective, measures recommended to minimize exposures to the viruses:

- **Get vaccinated!** Flu vaccine is the best defense against the flu. Getting flu vaccine also means that you will not pass the flu to others.
- **Wash your hands and use an alcohol hand sanitizer product often.** This is one of the most effective measures. Teach your family how to properly wash hands
- **Use good cough etiquette (into elbow, not hands)** or cover mouth and nose with tissues when you sneeze or cough. Throw away tissues immediately and wash hands.

- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** This decreases the chance that you will get the flu virus or other germs into your body, or that you will pass the flu to others.
- **Avoid contact with ill persons.** Avoid unnecessary holding, shaking hands, hugging, or kissing anyone who has a cold or the flu. People with young children who have an immune system problem or a chronic illness should avoid large crowds.
- **Disinfect items that you touch frequently such as doorknobs, telephones, etc.**
- **Ensure that personal preparedness plans and kits are up to date,** including food, medications and water supplies for the family.
- **Stay home if ill!** If you have flu symptoms, stay home from work or school and avoid public activities until fever free for 24 hours without fever reducers.
- **Ask your health care provider if you should get pneumococcal vaccine.** You need pneumococcal vaccine (pneumonia shot) if you are 65 years or older, a smoker, or if you have a medical condition like diabetes, asthma, or heart disease.
- **Contact your medical provider if you become ill** to determine if testing and treatment are necessary

**If you become ill and symptoms get worse requiring medical care:**

- When going to the doctor's office or the emergency room, you should avoid taking public transportation if possible.
- If you go to your doctor, please contact the doctor's office before you leave home and tell them you have flu-like symptoms. When you arrive at the doctor's office, go straight to the receptionist or nurse so that you can be put in a private room while you wait. You may be asked to wear a mask and you should sit away from others as much as possible. If you call an ambulance, let the operator know that you have flu-like symptoms, and also let the ambulance crew know when they arrive.

Continue to keep updated on additional clinics by logging on to our flu page on [www.westfordma.gov](http://www.westfordma.gov) and sign up for the department list serve.