

Message from the Mayor - Flu Virus 2009

For Detailed Information see: www.flu.gov

Dear Neighbors,

With the spread of the H1N1 (previously called the swine flu) many of you have been reading about the flu virus this year. The H1N1 virus is different from the Seasonal Flu virus that we're all used to. It is important that you know the best ways to protect your health (including vaccination details) the difference between the 'old and new' flu virus and receive accurate information. I encourage you to forward this information to friends and family as well.

Seasonal Flu – is what we are now calling the flu virus that we have come to know over years past. The people most susceptible to Seasonal Flu are our older citizens and people who have a chronic illness. Morris Township is again sponsoring our annual Seasonal Flu Vaccine clinic. The next clinic is scheduled for Wednesday October 14, 2009 from 1 – 3 pm at Town Hall. Preregistration is available for Senior Citizens (over 65) and those with a documented chronic illness (form here: http://www.morristwp.com/pdfs/Reg_Sea_FLU_Prereg_Fall_09.pdf).

H1N1 Flu – This is the newer flu virus that you may have read about. Many government agencies have been working hard to educate us all about this virus. It has already spread to all 50 states. There are various ways to avoid getting the flu (see below) including getting a flu shot. A vaccine has already been developed for H1N1 and is being brought to the public as fast as it becomes available. There is one very important difference between the H1N1 vaccine and the traditional Seasonal flu vaccine – that is who should get it. Unlike what you might suspect – in regards to H1N1 – the older you are the less likely you are to need the vaccine! The most vulnerable groups of people (and those who are the highest priority to get this new vaccine) are as follows (not in order of importance):

Young people from 6 months old to age 24

Pregnant women

Health Care providers who have direct patient contact

Family / Care givers with babies less than 6 months old

People age 25-64 with a chronic medical condition

You may have read that the new H1N1 vaccine will come in a nasal spray and injection forms. The nasal spray should only be given to healthy (non-pregnant) individuals up to 49 years old. One dose of the H1N1 vaccine is expected to be sufficient for people from age 10 – adult. Children from 6 months to 10 will need two doses (likely about 3-4 weeks apart). Morris Township is scheduled to receive H1N1 vaccine and will be scheduling additional flu clinics for the public once it arrives. In fact we have received a federal grant (along with Hanover and Harding Townships) to cover the cost of providing this vaccine to the public so there will be no cost to the tax payer for this service.

Prevention – Take these everyday steps to protect your health (from www.flu.gov):

Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.

Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

Stay home if you are sick until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever (100°F or 37.8°C) or signs of a fever (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine, such as Tylenol®).

Our Health Department has been keeping up to date on the latest information regarding the flu. As always they are willing and able to respond to the needs of our community as they develop. If you want to do additional research there are many resources with additional information on the flu. I suggest that you begin with the web site www.flu.gov. You can also get information from the NJ State League of Municipalities web site at www.njslom.org/flu-resource-center.html or from the Morris Twp. local Health Department.

Wishing you health this season,

H. Scott Rosenbush

Mayor