

For immediate release: October 22, 2009

H1N1 Flu Vaccine is available

Further to media releases on October 1 and 7, the Health Unit has announced that beginning the week of October 26, the H1N1 vaccine is available to all residents of Renfrew County and District that need and want it, beginning with the nationally recommended priority groups.

“Our first shipment of the H1N1 vaccine contains a limited number of doses, and the priority is to get these out to physicians, hospitals and long-term care homes that want to provide the vaccine to their patients and health care staff,” said Dr. Michael Corriveau, Medical Officer of Health at the Renfrew County and District Health Unit. This is in accordance with directions from the province on how to distribute the vaccine.

Early priority will be given to people most at risk of being infected with the virus. The priority groups include:

- People with chronic medical conditions, under age 65
- Pregnant women
- Healthy children 6 months to under 5 years of age
- Health care workers
- People living in remote or isolated communities
- Household contacts and care providers of persons at high risk who cannot be immunized or may not respond to vaccines

All pregnant women with pre-existing health conditions and healthy pregnant women in the second half of their pregnancy (more than 20 weeks) should speak to their care provider to decide if they should receive the adjuvanted vaccine that is available now.

Healthy pregnant women in the first half of their pregnancy are at less risk of complications from the flu, and should wait to receive the unadjuvanted vaccine, when it becomes available.

The vaccine will not be available to everyone at the same time, and Ontario wants to target the first doses to people who will benefit most. When production and delivery of the vaccine catches up to demand, there will be enough for everyone who wants it.

Renfrew County and District Health Unit will be offering pH1N1 flu clinics across the county beginning in November. The clinics are subject to change, so check the Health unit’s website at www.rcdhu.com or call the Health Info Line at 613-735-8666 or 1-800-267-1097 ext. 666 before coming.

“In the meantime, there are concrete things we can do to protect ourselves from the influenza virus” said Pat Ripmeester, coordinator at the Renfrew County and District Health Unit. “Wash your hands thoroughly and often; keep alcohol-based hand sanitizer handy; cough or sneeze into a tissue or your sleeve; keep surfaces and items disinfected; and get both seasonal and H1N1 flu shots.”

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Attachment: pH1N1 Flu Clinic Schedule

Media contacts:

Vicki Benoit, R.N., B.Sc.N.
Coordinator, Health Promotion and Clinical Services Division
613-735-8651 ext. 526

Pat Ripmeester, R.N., B.Sc.N
Coordinator, Health Promotion and Clinical Services Division
613-735-8651 ext. 515

Dr. Michael Corriveau, B.Sc., M.D., M.H.Sc.
Medical Officer of Health
613-735-8651 ext. 503