



Town of Lexington

Office of Community Development – Health Division

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September 24, 2009

Dear Parents / Guardians:

During a statewide conference call between Local Boards of Health (LBOH) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) on September 23, 2009, it was revealed that *Seasonal Influenza* vaccine and *Novel H1N1* vaccine doses are expected to arrive at the Lexington Board of Health over the next four (4) to Six (6) weeks (late October to early November). The timing of the vaccine 's arrival may impact our ability to conduct the clinics that were listed in the Lexington Public School's Document newsletter titled "*Influenza Guidance for Parents of School – Aged Children dated September 14, 2009*". The impact of not receiving our vaccine shipment in time may include limiting the number of doses that are available in order to reach specific target populations **or** it may also require us to post pone or reschedule a clinic to a later date.

Please use these dates (October 16, October 30 and October 31) as "**placeholders on your calendar only**" until further confirmation of the vaccine arrival becomes available.

Announcements will be made should sufficient quantities of vaccine arrive prior to the October clinic dates. As of today, the Saturday October 17, 2009 clinic has been cancelled and will be rescheduled to a later date in November or December, (depending upon vaccine availability). Future clinic dates will be announced when more information becomes available. The new dates will be posted on the Town of Lexington website and other local media outlets.

It is now likely that *Seasonal Vaccine* and *Novel H1N1* vaccine will be available at the same time. It is possible to obtain both vaccines on the same day as long as they are the injectable type (single dose administered by a syringe injection). However, if a nasal application or "mist" is used to dispense the vaccine, then the patient will need to wait at least thirty (30) days before the other vaccine may be given to that individual.

Important Information for your to know about the clinics.

All residents (and non residents) four (4) years and older are invited to attend one of the free *Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Clinics* and *Novel H1N1 Vaccination Clinics* sponsored by the Office of Community Development, Health Division, and the Board of Health. We ask that residents sixty-five (65) years and older provide their health insurance card (Medicare or Medicare Advantage plan). These clinics are a free service. Medicare does not charge the individual participating in this clinic for the vaccination. Medicare can reimburse the Town of Lexington, in order to support our community health programs.

- Seasonal Flu vaccine will be available to all those four (4) years and up. The *Seasonal Influenza* vaccine will be targeted for residents at least fifty years of age, those under nineteen years of age and those residents with chronic illnesses.
- Novel H1N1 vaccine will be available to all those four (4) years and up. Priority groups for those who should be vaccinated for *Novel H1N1* are pregnant women, family members of babies less than six months old, health care workers, those with chronic illness under the age of sixty-five (65) and school age children. Children under the age of ten (10) will be required to obtain a second “booster” dose approximately one month after receiving their first dose of H1N1 vaccine.
- Pneumococcal vaccine will be available to all those nineteen (19) and older who smoke tobacco products or have asthma, are sixty-five (65) and older, those immunocompromised or chronically ill, or those people sixty-five (65) and older who received the vaccine before sixty-five (65) and five (5) years has since elapsed.

Upon arrival at Cary Hall

We ask that adults eighteen (18) years and older enter Cary Hall from the right front entrance (when facing Cary Hall from Massachusetts Ave) and bear to the right, not entering the auditorium, but the hallway beyond it to pick up forms for registration. They will continue down the hallway and enter the auditorium at the stage area.

In an effort to keep families together (*Family Clinic*), we ask that adults with children four (4) to seventeen (17) years old enter Cary Hall from the Left front entrance (when facing Cary Hall from Massachusetts Ave) and bear to the left, not entering the auditorium, but the hallway beyond it to pick up forms for registration. They will continue down the hallway and enter the auditorium at the stage area.

For those with mobility issues or homebound, please contact the Health Division (as listed below) for alternative means to obtain a flu vaccine, including, but not limited to drive-up service at the event.

For the Saturday October 31st clinic, a Lexpress bus will be available (free of charge) to shuttle citizens from the Countryside, Vynebrooke, Greeley and Avalon complexes to the Cary Hall clinic and back. A shuttle schedule will be revealed over the next few weeks.

There will be Town of Lexington Health Division staff and Medical Reserve Corps volunteers wearing white vests and identification badges to answer any of your questions.

The Lexington Board of Health, Office of Community Development, Health Division, the Town Manager’s Office, Emergency Planners (Police and Fire Departments) and the Lexington School Department would like your help in preparing for the upcoming 2009 / 2010 influenza season. This fall, you and your students are likely to be exposed to both *Seasonal Influenza (flu) Virus* and *Novel H1N1 Influenza Virus* (formerly known as swine flu). Either of these flu viruses can be transmitted from person to person in your home, in community settings, and in schools if people infected with the virus come in very close contact (uncovered coughing within a three foot area) with other people.

There are five (5) very important steps you and your family can take to minimize your risks of becoming ill with either type of influenza virus.

1. Please remember to wash hands frequently, particularly before eating breakfast, snacks or lunch and before/after group activities.
2. When coughing or sneezing, please cover your mouth with a tissue or your sleeve. Throw the tissue in the rubbish or garbage after you use it. Please also reinforce this with your students.
3. Individuals should stay home from Work/ School when they are sick. Students and teachers who are ill with flu symptoms (a fever, accompanied with a cough or sore throat) need to remain home until they are fever free for 24 hours without the help of any type of medication. Medication only reduces the fever to the individual. You are still contagious (shedding the virus in your saliva and sputum) and can infect your friends, teachers and co-workers until you are fever free, without medication for 24 hours
4. Students who are ill with influenza-like illness should be isolated immediately from others to avoid possible transmission of the illness.
5. Receive a *Seasonal Influenza* vaccine. Please schedule an appointment with your primary care provider, or check <http://flu.masspro.org> for a list of all free public flu clinics in Massachusetts.

Currently, there are no confirmed cases or suspect cases of Novel H1N1 within the Lexington Public Schools (LPS). From April 25 through August 31, 2009, there were a total of sixteen (16) confirmed cases of Type A Influenza in Lexington residents. At least six (6) of these cases have been confirmed for *Novel H1N1*. The confirmed cases of Type A Influenza have ranged in age from two (2) to forty-five (45) years of age. Twelve (12) of them have been under the age of eighteen (18) years of age. To date, all of the cases in Lexington of *Novel H1N1 Influenza* have fully recovered. However, influenza can cause serious illness, and cases of more severe illness in the future may occur. If you have a chronic medical condition (lung disease, asthma, heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, a compromised immune system or cancer, or are pregnant), please call your medical provider to let them know if you have, or have been in close contact with someone who has influenza-like symptoms. Your medical provider can advise you of additional precautions or medication you should take.

On Thursday, October 22, 2009, from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m., at Cary Hall, 1605 Massachusetts Avenue, there will be a lecture titled *Flu: What You Can Do – Caring for People at Home*. You are invited to attend this presentation to learn about flu prevention, caring for someone with the flu, and preparing for flu season. It is also applicable to a pandemic situation where hospitals and clinics may already be at full capacity.

Regular updates will be posted on the Town Website (<http://ci.lexington.ma.us/health/division-2008.cfm>). In addition, the Department of Public Health has an H1N1 Virus (swine flu) hotline, which has been set up to help answer any general questions about the disease. Call 1-866-627-7968 and dial 1, or simply dial 211 to access the hotline. To receive a free copy of *[Flu: What You Can Do – Caring for People at Home](#)* please contact the Office of *Community Development, Health Division*, Gerard Cody, Health Director at 781-862-0500 x 237. You may also visit, www.cdc.gov/swineflu or www.mass.gov/dph/flu.

Sincerely,

Gerard F. Cody, R.E.H.S./R.S.
Health Director

cc: BOH

School Administration
William Middlemiss, Fire Chief
Mark Corr, Police Chief
Town Manager's Office
Office of Community Development