

Current Influenza Vaccine Supply Situation Recorded Information Line – 10/15/04

All influenza clinics in Broome County are postponed temporarily. This includes the Broome County Health Department and Office for Aging flu clinics that were scheduled to begin in the last week of October. The Broome County health care community is working very closely together to determine which organizations and providers have vaccine and how much in order to insure that whatever vaccine is available gets to people who are most likely to become seriously ill if they get the flu.

Some primary care physicians have begun to provide their limited flu supplies to their patients that are high risk according to the Centers for Disease Control recommendations. If you are in one of these priority groups, your primary care provider MAY be scheduling appointments.

Remember that the Influenza season can peak anywhere from December through March, but most often peaks in February. So getting the vaccine in December, or even later, can be beneficial in most years. There is little, if any, influenza illness in Broome County at this time. It is important for the public to realize that there has not been a change in the influenza activity at this point, only in the availability of the vaccine. There is no need for the public to panic.

The following priority groups for vaccination with inactivated influenza vaccine this season are considered to be of equal importance and are:

- **Adults aged 65 years or older** - even if you are in great health;
- **All children aged 6 – 23 months** - Children younger than 2 years old have one of the highest rates of hospitalization from influenza;
- **Adults and children with chronic health conditions** – Like heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, asthma, cancer, or HIV/AIDS;
- **Women who will be pregnant during the influenza season** – Flu season is typically November through March;
- **Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities;**
- **Children aged 6 months – 18 years on chronic aspirin therapy;**
- **Health-care workers involved in direct patient care;** and
- **Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged less than 6 months.**

All providers and community clinics will be using these categories as screening guidance for those who will be able to get the vaccine.

If you are not included in one of these priority groups, please don't ask for a flu shot. Save it for someone who needs it more! For most healthy adults, coming down with the flu is an annoyance, but not a serious health threat.

There are certain good health habits that can help prevent the spread of flu:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
- Stay home when you are sick. If possible, stay home from work, school, and errands when you are sick. You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. If you don't have a tissue, cough into your sleeve.
- Clean your hands after you cough or sneeze – with soap and warm water, or an alcohol-based hand cleaner. Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.

Other good habits, such as getting plenty of sleep, engaging in physical activity, managing stress, drinking water, and eating good food, will help you stay healthy all winter and all year.

The vaccine from the manufacturer Chiron has not been distributed at all in this country, so any vaccine that will be provided is safe.

Please follow the news and you are welcome to check back to the website at www.gobroomecounty.com and click on the Flu Icon or the Recorded Information Line at 607.778.3911, option 1, for updates. As we have more information we will provide it to the public.