



## Influenza A (H1N1) GASHA Update #14: October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2009

### Update

- We will be resuming regular GASHA Updates as new information becomes available regarding H1N1 and our pandemic planning activities.
- Members of the GASHA Leadership Team are providing both staff and community based education sessions throughout the District on GASHA pandemic planning. Several of our Facility Managers have made presentations to their local town councils regarding GASHA pandemic efforts and the site specific pandemic plans of the community hospitals.
- The Nova Scotia immunization campaign has begun with the announcement of federal authorization of the pandemic H1N1 vaccine.
- Specifics on the plan include:
  - H1N1 vaccine will be available for free to all Nova Scotians who want it
  - People in high-risk groups for seasonal flu can get seasonal flu and H1N1 shots at the same time
  - H1N1 vaccine will be available through community clinics, some doctor offices and workplace clinics
- Public Health Community Clinics within GASHA will begin next week. As soon as the full list of clinics is available, it will be posted on the GASHA Intranet, GASHA Internet and on the Public Health website. Individuals will also be able to call Healthlink 811 for information on clinics in their area.
- **GASHA Workplace Clinics:** A listing of clinic times and locations is available for St. Martha's Regional Hospital and will be posted throughout the facility. This clinic is open to all GASHA staff. **Staff in the sites outside of St. Martha's are asked to contact their Facility Manager for site specific clinic information.**

### WHO SHOULD GET VACCINATED FOR H1N1?

- 1) Everyone 10 years of age or older should receive one dose of the **adjuvanted\*** vaccine
- 2) Children between six months and 10 years should receive the adjuvanted vaccine in two half doses administered at least 21 days apart
- 3) Pregnant women are advised to get one dose of the vaccine. Unadjuvanted vaccine will be available for them around mid-November. They can also access the adjuvanted vaccine prior to that if necessary.
- 4) Infants less than six months old are not vaccinated for any form of influenza.

*Adjuvanted—vaccine with immunity booster*

*Unadjuvanted-vaccine without immunity booster*

## **THE H1N1 VACCINE IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED FOR:**

- 1) People under age 65 with chronic conditions
- 2) Healthcare workers
- 3) Children six months to five years
- 4) Pregnant women
- 5) Household contacts and care providers for infants less than six months old
- 6) People whose immune systems are compromised

## **TWO NEW GROUPS HAVE BEEN ADDED TO THE LIST OF THOSE WHO ARE STRONGLY RECOMMENDED TO GET THE SEASONAL FLU VACCINE**

- 1) People living in a home that is expecting a newborn during the November to April flu season
- 2) Anyone who lives with or cares for children less than 24 months old

*\*Other groups previously identified as a priority for the seasonal flu vaccine include people 65 and over, residents of long term care facilities and adults and children with chronic illnesses.*

Along with immunization, people are also encouraged to take the following precautions to prevent illness:

- Wash hands often with soap and water, especially after a sneeze or cough. When soap and water are not handy, alcohol-based hand sanitizers are an acceptable alternative.
  - Cough and sneeze into elbow or sleeve.
  - If using tissues, dispose of them appropriately and wash hands.
  - Limit touching eyes, nose and mouth.
  - Do not share drinking glasses, water bottles, mouth guards, cosmetics or eating utensils.
  - Dr. Strang continues to advise Nova Scotians to make every effort to minimize the spread of the virus. The most important step is to stay home with flu-like symptoms, which are fever and/or cough with unusual tiredness, head/muscle/joint aches or sore throat.
  - If concerned that medical advice or care is needed, contact Healthlink 811. Like any illness, should symptoms worsen contact a doctor or walk-in clinic.
- **WEB SITES**
  - Department of Health Promotion and Protection: [www.gov.ns.ca/H1N1](http://www.gov.ns.ca/H1N1)
  - Public Health Services [www.publichealth.ns.ca](http://www.publichealth.ns.ca)
  - Public Health Agency of Canada: [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca)
  - [www.fightflu.ca](http://www.fightflu.ca)

