



Jefferson County PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

Public Health Facility, 531 Meade Street, Watertown, New York 13601

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jefferson County Public Health Service Offers FREE Adult Flu Vaccination To Assist With Preparedness Drill

Watertown, N.Y., October 15, 2012 - Thanks to limited doses of influenza vaccine supplied by the New York State Department of Health, the Jefferson County Public Health Service (JCPHS) is able to offer a no charge flu clinic as a one time opportunity in order to test response capabilities in a potential emergency situation where large numbers of citizens would need to be vaccinated in a short period of time. This clinic is a unique opportunity for residents to receive a flu vaccination at **no charge** to protect their health and to help our community prepare for an emergency.

In the event of a disease outbreak, one of the most important tasks for local public health departments is to protect area residents from illness. If there were to be a large outbreak or epidemic, plans must be in place to deliver vaccine or medication to the largest number of people in the shortest amount of time. Each year JCPHS conducts a drill to test the mass vaccination plan. This year will focus on training staff in online and electronic systems that will hopefully increase efficiency and effectiveness of JCPHS response efforts during a mass vaccination scenario.

Again this year JCPHS will test the plan by performing the drill via flu vaccination appointments made only on the online scheduling system, eHealth. This clinic is open to children and adults over the age of 3. Individuals with access to a computer and an email account can schedule a no charge flu vaccine appointment on-line anytime, 24 hours a day until registration cutoff. Friends and/or family members can also schedule an appointment for those who do not have web access. The on-line service also includes information about: location and direction to the clinic, what you need to bring to your appointment, and general information about the flu. Setting up an eHealth account will also make it convenient to receive notices and schedule vaccinations in the future.

To make an appointment go to www.jcphs.org. Appointments are limited.

Although all people over 6 months of age should receive the yearly influenza vaccine, this drill is for those over 3 years of age. Please contact your pediatrician to schedule a flu vaccination if your child who is 0-3 has not yet received one.

Anyone can get and spread the flu, even healthy people. While flu can make anyone sick, certain people are at greater risk for serious complications from the flu, including:

- older people;
- young children;
- people with chronic lung disease (such as asthma and COPD), diabetes (type 1 and 2), heart disease, neurologic conditions and certain other long-term medical conditions; and
- pregnant and postpartum women.

Most people who get influenza will recover in a few days to less than 2 weeks, but some people will develop complications (such as pneumonia) as a result of the flu, some of which can be life-threatening and result in death. Pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus infections and ear infections are four examples of complications from flu. People who do not get vaccinated are taking two risks: first, they are placing themselves at risk for the flu, including a potentially long and serious illness; and second, if they get sick, they are also placing their close contacts at risk for influenza. The bottom line is anyone, even healthy people, can get sick from the flu.

Now is the time to protect yourself, your family, and your friends. Get the flu vaccine. If you have questions, please call 786-3720.

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