

## **Pandemic H1N1 flu virus update**

October 23, 2009

Dear parents, staff members and volunteers,

The H1N1 vaccine has arrived in Peel! The H1N1 vaccine is your best protection. You should get it. Peel Public Health H1N1 vaccination clinics will begin on November 2 to December 11 as outlined in the attached poster.

Early clinics are being offered on October 28 and 29, 2009 at the International Centre in Mississauga. Early clinics are directed especially to residents under 65 years of age with chronic medical conditions (asthma, diabetes, heart, lung or kidney disease or those receiving treatment for cancer or other illnesses that might affect the immune system) and their caregivers, as well as health care workers.

The H1N1 vaccine is free for everyone who lives and works in Ontario.

Before you attend a clinic, please note:

- **Do not attend a H1N1 vaccination clinic if you think you have the flu. Wait until you are better to get vaccinated.** Flu-like symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, runny nose, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Stay home from school or work and limit contact with others if you are sick. Contact your doctor or call Telehealth at 1-866-797-0000 if your symptoms get worse.
- **Pregnant women and children 6 months to 1 year of age must see a doctor to get the H1N1 vaccine.** Pregnant women and children 6 months to 1 year of age will not be able to obtain their H1N1 vaccinations at Peel Public Health H1N1 vaccine clinics. If you are pregnant, Peel Public Health recommends you talk with your doctor about receiving the H1N1 vaccine. Pregnant women who develop flu-like symptoms should contact their doctor right away. Children under 6 months of age are not eligible for the H1N1 vaccine.
- **Children 6 months to 9 years of age will require 2 vaccinations.** There must be at least 21 days between the first and second vaccine.
- **Bring your health card or driver's license.** This will help our staff at the clinic to register you more efficiently. *These documents are **not** required in order to receive the vaccine.*

In addition to getting the H1N1 vaccine, the best ways to reduce the risk of becoming ill or spreading flu viruses include:

**Wash your hands frequently:** Wash your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially after you cough or sneeze.

**Practise good hygiene:** Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve or elbow. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are spread this way.

**Stay Healthy:** Eat healthy foods, stay physically active and get adequate rest to keep your immune system strong.

**Monitor your health:** If you develop flu-like symptoms stay home from school or work and limit your contact with others while you are sick. Contact your doctor or call Telehealth at 1-866-797-0000 if your symptoms get worse.

For more information on the H1N1 flu virus, visit [www.peelregion.ca](http://www.peelregion.ca) or call 905-799-7700, Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to speak to a health professional.



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