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County Executive

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Commissioner, Department of Health

ATTENTION

Public Health Update

The Westchester County Department of Health provides public health updates to members of the medical community on important issues affecting public health in Westchester

DATE: February 2, 2009

SUBJECT: Reminder that influenza vaccination for all women who will be pregnant during the influenza season is recommended

None of the pregnant women with laboratory confirmed influenza identified by the Westchester County Department of Health this season had received a flu vaccine.

Prenatal care providers are reminded that pregnant women are at increased risk for medical complications of influenza and that vaccination is particularly important for such patients. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Academy of Family Physicians all have recommended routine vaccination against the flu for all pregnant women.

Influenza activity in Westchester County and the region increased as of the week beginning 1/12/09. To date, 88% of the flu strains available for testing are Type A influenza. Although more detailed typing information and anti-viral resistance testing of strains from Westchester County residents are not yet available, CDC, and New York State and City Departments of Health have reported that 98% and 100% of the prevailing influenza type A strains circulating nationally and in the region are resistant to oseltamivir (tamiflu), an antiviral drug used to treat the flu. Thus, vaccination this season is particularly important and remains the best means for preventing influenza. It is not too late to give the flu vaccine, since flu activity is just beginning and often does not peak until late February or March.

Please contact the Westchester County Department of Health (WCDH) for additional influenza information at:

(914) 813-5159
(914) 813-5000

Mon-Fri 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
24 hours/day; 7 days/week

For more detailed information, please refer the following link to the 2008-9 recommendations and guidelines for the prevention and control of influenza <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5707.pdf>