



NEWS RELEASE

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Caroline Calderone Baisley
Director of Health
Tel [203] 622-7836

Deborah C. Travers
Director of Family Health
Tel [203] 622-3782

September 19, 2018

For Immediate Release

2018-2019 INFLUENZA SEASON

Influenza (commonly called “flu”) is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. These viruses are spread when a person who has the flu coughs, sneezes or touches a surface handled by others. It can be mild or severe and infects millions of Americans every year. Last year, flu related hospitalizations mirrored the 2014-15 season with a CDC estimated high of over 700,000 cases. The best way to prevent getting the flu is to get vaccinated. It takes up to two weeks after vaccination for protection (immunity) to develop in the majority of adults. To ensure proper protection from the seasonal flu virus, which can begin to circulate early in the fall, the Department of Health has scheduled immunization clinics throughout the month of October. Persons 9 years and older will be eligible to receive influenza vaccine at Department clinics. The **Fluzone High-Dose vaccine**, made especially for people 65 years of age and older, will be offered at clinics. Clinical trials indicate that the Fluzone High Dose vaccine helps strengthen the body’s immune response in older people.

Each year the seasonal influenza vaccine contains three or four influenza virus strains. In 2018-19, the influenza seasonal vaccine will contain one Influenza A-like (H3N2) virus, one Influenza A-like (H1N1) virus and either one or two Influenza B-like virus. The viruses in the flu shot are inactivated (not live), so **you cannot get the flu from a flu shot**. Some minor side effects that could occur include: low grade fever, soreness and aches. Influenza can affect anyone; however, those 65 years of age and older have a higher risk for complications from influenza. Usually people experience a rapid onset of high fever (although not all individuals exhibit fever), cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, chills, headache, fatigue and body aches.

Director of Health, Caroline C. Baisley, emphasized, “getting vaccinated every year is the best way to provide protection against circulating influenza viruses. The traditional flu season begins early October

and runs through May in most years and sustained influenza transmission is usually not seen before January or later. The Department of Health is committed to working with medical providers in an effort to provide influenza vaccine in the community, especially to those at increased risk for severe complications from influenza.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all persons 6 months of age and older should be immunized; however, it is especially important for the following groups to receive flu vaccine:

- All children aged 6 months through 59 months; all persons aged 50 years and older, especially adults over 65
- Persons 6 months of age and older with underlying chronic medical conditions such as asthma, cardiovascular disease (except isolated hypertension), diabetes, neurological, hepatic or renal disorders and immunosuppression, that require frequent or ongoing medical management.
- Women who are or will be pregnant during the influenza season
- Household contacts, including children, of persons at high risk due to medical conditions and/or infants under six months of age
- Healthcare workers and residents in long term care facilities.
- Persons who are morbidly obese (Body Mass Index (BMI) ≥ 40)

Note: Seasonal influenza vaccine is recommended for all persons aged 6 months of age and older, however, immunizations will not be administered to individuals under 9 years of age at the Department clinics. Parents are advised to contact their pediatricians for an appointment and dose requirements for children six months to eight years of age. For additional information about how to obtain a flu vaccination from the Department of Health for children under age 8 years, please contact the Division of Family Health at (203) 622-7861 or (203) 622-6495.

Who Should NOT Get the Seasonal Flu Shot

- People who had a **severe allergic reaction** to eggs. (Persons with a history of egg allergy, who have experienced only hives after exposure to egg, should receive influenza vaccine. In this case, vaccine should be administered only by a physician who is familiar with the potential manifestations of egg allergy.)

- People who have had a severe reaction to a flu vaccine in the past or are allergic to other components of the vaccine, including egg protein, etc.
- People who previously developed Gullain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) within 6 weeks of getting a flu shot
- Children less than 6 months of age
- People who have a moderate or severe illness with a fever should wait until their symptoms lessen before receiving a vaccination

▪ People younger than age 65 should not receive the Fluzone High Dose vaccine

▪ Consult your primary care provider about Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine (LAIV) – nasal spray contraindications or precautions.

Pneumococcal Vaccines

The CDC recommends pneumococcal vaccination (PCV13 or Prevnar13® or PPSV23 or Pneumovax23®) for all adults 65 years or older. Both pneumococcal vaccines will be available at clinics according to recommended schedules:

- A dose of PCV13 to adults 65 years or older who have not previously received this vaccine followed by a dose of PPSV23 at least one (1) year later
- Persons who have been vaccinated with one or more doses of PPSV23 should receive a dose of PCV13 at least one (1) year after they received the most recent dose of PPSV23.

(Note: These pneumococcal vaccines as well as the shingles vaccine are available at the Department of Health year round. Call (203) 622-6495 for additional information about recommended vaccines for adults.)

“Although the single best way to prevent the flu or pneumonia is to get vaccinated, there are other ways to protect yourself from respiratory illnesses,” states Director of Family Health, Deborah C. Travers. Everyday preventive steps include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick.** Keep your distance from others when you are sick

- **Stay home from work or school when you are sick** except to seek medical care. Your fever (100° F and above) should be gone for at least 24 hours without using fever reducing medications or antiviral drugs. It could take up to one week or more to feel better.
- **Take flu antiviral medications if your doctor prescribes them.**
- **Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you sneeze or cough
- **Wash your hands** with soap and water frequently. If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based cleaners (at least 60% alcohol ingredient) are effective.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth** to prevent the spread of germs.
- **Get plenty of sleep, water, healthy food and exercise**
- **Clean and disinfect objects and surfaces** that may be contaminated with germs.
- **Seek medical care early.** Consult your health care provider immediately if you develop flu symptoms.

During the influenza season, the public is encouraged to call the Department of Health flu information hotline for up-to-date information at (203) 622-3774, or visit the Department's website main page at www.greenwichct.org.

GREENWICH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

INFLUENZA, PNEUMONIA AND ADULT VACCINE IMMUNIZATION CLINIC SCHEDULE – 2018

<p>THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2018 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM GREENWICH TOWN HALL 101 Field Point Road, Greenwich</p>	<p><i>Not Just For Seniors!</i></p> <p>HEALTH AND WELLNESS EXPO (Formerly Senior Health Fair) THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2018 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM EASTERN GREENWICH CIVIC CENTER <i>Harding Road, Old Greenwich</i></p>
<p>MONDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2018 3:00 - 5:30 PM GREENWICH TOWN HALL 101 Field Point Road, Greenwich</p>	<p>TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2018 3:00 – 5:00 PM BENDHEIM WESTERN GREENWICH CIVIC CENTER <i>499 Pemberwick Road, Greenwich</i></p>

All Clinics are for persons 9 years of age and older

FEEES AND ACCEPTED INSURANCE

Participants between the ages of **9 years to 64 years** will be charged **\$35.00** for the seasonal immunization.

Participants **65 years of age or older** must bring their Medicare Advantage ID Card/Traditional Medicare Part B Card or a fee of **\$35.00** (Seasonal); **\$55.00** (High Dose); **\$100.00** (Pneumovax 23); **\$195.00** (Pneumovax 13) will be charged for the immunizations. Influenza and pneumonia vaccinations are also covered by United Health Care/Oxford Plan.

Medicare Advantage Plans DO NOT cover pneumonia immunizations received at public clinics.

Pneumonia immunizations must be over one year apart or Medicare will not cover the cost

Checks should be made payable to the **“TOWN OF GREENWICH”** and if paying in cash, exact change will be appreciated.

Medicaid will not be accepted; however, patients are advised to call 203-622-7851 for further assistance.

Credit cards will not be accepted.

Short sleeves and attendance no earlier than 15 minutes before the start of the clinic will be appreciated.

The public is encouraged to call the flu line at: **203-622-3774** prior to attending any clinic. All changes to the set schedule will be recorded and publicized to the best of the Department’s capability.