

Flu Vaccine Information 2009-2010

Chestnut Ridge Pediatrics endorses the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Centers for Disease Control regarding flu vaccination for children:

All children ages 6 months up to 18 yrs old should receive vaccination for both seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu.

Unfortunately, although we ordered enough vaccine for our patients in February, the manufacturer of the injectable flu vaccine for children > 2 yrs has been unable to ship our order and can not tell us when or even if we will get it. This problem is completely out of our control and we are as frustrated as you are about it. (feel free to call Sanofi to voice your disappointment: 800-981-2491). Our supply of injectable vaccine for infants is arriving in small batches. We hope that we will receive all of our infant vaccine by the end of November. Please be patient. The seasonal flu season does not usually start before December 1.

We do have adequate supplies of the intranasal Flumist vaccine. Flumist can be given to children 2 yrs and older who have no serious chronic medical condition. This year we are giving Flumist to children with asthma. Studies have shown a very slight risk of wheezing in the 4-6 week period after administration of Flumist in children with asthma, but we believe the benefit of the vaccine in preventing the flu outweighs that small risk. If you don't want your child to receive the Flumist we suggest you try to get your child vaccinated with the flu shot at a local pharmacy or town health clinic.

As in previous years, we are offering Flumist to eligible parents (under 50 years old with no chronic medical conditions) for a \$40 fee. We recommend that parents of children less than 2 years of age receive flu vaccine to protect their children. This is particularly important for parents of infants less than 6 months of age.

We have applied with the state to be a provider of the H1N1 vaccine, but have no idea if or when we will be giving the vaccine. If we do get the vaccine from the state, we will send out an automated telephone message to all of our patients and post the information on our website. ***Please do not call the office to ask about H1N1 vaccine.*** Some parents have questioned the safety of the H1N1 vaccine. The vaccine is manufactured exactly the same way as the seasonal flu vaccine and should be just as safe. There have been no significant side effects in the studies done thus far with the H1N1 vaccine.

H1N1 flu is much more contagious than seasonal flu. It does not appear to be more serious than seasonal flu but because it will infect more children, there will be a higher than normal number of children hospitalized and a higher than normal number of deaths associated with H1N1. Most children who develop serious disease are under the age of 2 years or have underlying medical conditions. However, there have been deaths of previously healthy children also. Several towns in our area will be offering clinics for the H1N1 vaccine – monitor your local papers and take advantage of these clinics.