

New Bedford Health Department Seasonal Flu Vaccinations

New Bedford Health Department to Hold Seasonal Flu
Vaccination Clinics During the Month of January



New Bedford, Massachusetts – The New Bedford Health Department Nursing Division to hold multiple Seasonal Flu vaccination clinics open to all New Bedford residents. The clinics will take place at the New Bedford Health Department located at 1213 Purchase Street on the 1st Floor on Friday, January 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th from 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M. and Monday, January 10th, 24th, and 31st from 1:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. and at New Bedford City Hall located at 133 William Street on Tuesday, January 11th, 18th and 25th from 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

The clinics will provide vaccinations to all New Bedford adults and children who are 6 months of age or older. Vaccinations are provided free of charge to individuals who belong to the following insurance plans and can provide their health insurance card at the time of their vaccination: MassHealth, Medicare, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Harvard Pilgrim, Neighborhood Health Plan, Unicare, or Tufts Health Plan.

Residents who are not enrolled in one of the above mentioned plans are eligible to receive the vaccine for a \$5.00 fee.

The Massachusetts Department of Health recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older should be vaccinated for the flu. The only exceptions are people with a severe allergy to eggs or to something else in the vaccine. It is especially important that the following people get a flu shot every year:

- Children ages 6 months through 18 years.
- People 50 years of age and older.
- Pregnant and postpartum women.
- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease and weakened immune systems.
- People with muscle and nerve disorders that make it difficult to breath or swallow.
- Children ages 6 months through 18 years on long-term aspirin therapy.
- People who live in nursing homes and other long term care facilities.
- Anyone who might transmit flu to someone at risk. For example, health care workers, including those in training, emergency response workers, direct care staff, people who live with or care for anyone on the list above and people who live or care for infants under 6 months of age including parents, siblings and daycare providers.

“As noted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the timing of flu is very unpredictable and can vary from season to season. Flu activity most commonly peaks in the United States in January or February. However, seasonal flu activity can occur as late as May,” said Marianne De Souza, Director of the New Bedford Health Department. “Vaccination is the single most effective way to protect yourself and your loved ones from the flu and we encourage all residents including

parents with infants 6 months or older to get vaccinated."

The Massachusetts Department of Health provides the following advice on how to prevent getting the flu:

- Get the flu vaccine every year especially if you are pregnant or have a chronic health problem.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand gel.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or into the inside of your elbow if you don't have a tissue. Throw tissues away and wash your hands.
- Always wash your hands before touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Use household cleaners to clean things that are touched often, like door knobs, toys, and phones.
- Avoid close physical contact with people who are sick. Try to stay at least 3 to 6 feet from someone who is sick with the flu.
- People with young children, a weak immune system, or a chronic illness should avoid crowds, if possible.
- Stay home from work and school if you get sick with a flu-like illness (fever with cough or sore throat) and avoid contact with others so the virus does not spread. Stay at home until you have been free from fever for at least 24 hours after your last dose of fever-reducing medication (like Tylenol, Advil or Motrin). For most people this will mean staying at home for about 4 days.

For more information on the upcoming flu clinics please contact the City of New Bedford HealthDepartment at (508) 991-6199.