



Dutchess County Department of Health Public Health Advisory*

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DCDOH strongly recommends the use of Antivirals for Individuals with Influenza-like Illness

Date: February 11, 2010 - 2 pm

Please Distribute to: Healthcare Providers, Emergency Medicine, Pediatrics, Primary Care, Infectious Diseases, Internal Medicine, Family Medicine, Laboratory Medicine, Pulmonary Medicine, Critical Care, and Infection Control.

SUMMARY:

- A review of influenza-related deaths in Dutchess County since the H1N1 outbreak in April 2009 reveals that 75% of H1N1 deaths occurred in persons who had known exposure, fell into a high-risk category, and were not offered chemo-prophylaxis.
- Dutchess County Department of Health strongly recommends the use of antiviral medication for individuals with Influenza-like illness. Antiviral medication is available for uninsured and underinsured individuals free of charge at area pharmacies.

NYSDOH HEALTH ADVISORY: UPDATED CLINICAL GUIDANCE FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS FOR THE 2009-2010 INFLUENZA SEASON (December 2009) stresses:

- Prompt antiviral prophylaxis for persons at high risk who have a known exposure to influenza-like illness.
- Treatment should be started as early as possible for persons at high-risk of complications from influenza.
- When chemoprophylaxis is indicated, antiviral medication should be initiated as soon as possible following the exposure and should continue for 10 days following the last known exposure to influenza.
- Providers should not wait for laboratory confirmation of influenza as treatment is most effective when started in the first 48 hours of illness.
- Patients given post-exposure chemoprophylaxis should be informed that the chemoprophylaxis lowers but does not eliminate the risk of influenza and that protection stops when the medication course is stopped.
- Patients receiving chemoprophylaxis should be encouraged to seek medical evaluation as soon as they develop a febrile respiratory illness that might indicate influenza.
- All persons, especially those known to be a high risk for influenza complications should be offered H1N1 vaccine at every clinical opportunity.

***Health Alert**- conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention; **Health Advisory**- provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action; **Health Update**- provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Dutchess County Department of Health

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