

# Township of West Milford

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Department of Health  
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September 8, 2009

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The West Milford Health Department, and your school district are preparing for the 2009/2010 flu season. We expect that in addition to the seasonal flu we will be seeing the novel H1N1 flu, as it is still circulating world wide.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that children 6 months to 24 years of age get vaccinated annually for seasonal flu. Parents are reminded that students in pre-school up to age 5 are required to have the seasonal flu shot. The seasonal flu vaccine will offer protection from the seasonal flu but not H1N1.

This year CDC is also recommending that children be vaccinated for H1N1 flu. Pending approval by the federal government, we expect an H1N1 vaccine sometime in late October or early November. Once the CDC releases the vaccine it should be available at local health department clinics and from your health care provider. **Vaccination will be voluntary.**

Besides vaccine, there are effective methods of prevention that help minimize risk of illness. Good hygiene habits such as washing your hands thoroughly and frequently with soap and water prevents the spread of illness. Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue that is thrown away is also important. If your child is sick, please keep them home. The recommendation for anyone with influenza-like illness is to stay home for 24 hours after the fever goes away without taking a fever-reducing medication.

If your child has influenza-like illness, which includes fever, cough, and/or sore throat please keep your child home and report the absence to your school. Based on the current CDC guidance it is unlikely that we will recommend closing schools. Practicing good hygiene habits and staying home when sick are more effective methods to reduce the spread of illness. These hygiene habits also apply to adults in the workplace.

The West Milford Health Department website at [www.westmilford.org](http://www.westmilford.org) will be updated regularly with links to CDC and the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services. Should you have specific questions we encourage you to call your local Health Department.

Rest assured that your School Administration and local Health Department are working in unison with Passaic County officials to minimize the risk to your children.

Sincerely,

*William Wallace*

William Wallace  
West Milford Health Officer