



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Region IV Public Health
Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania, Wahkiakum counties
and Cowlitz Tribe

Health Advisory

Please deliver a copy of the accompanying alert to each provider in your organization.

Thank you

Questions regarding this alert may be directed to the office of:

Alan Melnick, MD, MPH
Health Officer

Jennifer Vines, MD, MPH
Deputy Health Officer

**Clark County Public Health
Cowlitz County Health Department
Skamania County Health Department
Wahkiakum County Department of Health and Human Services
(360) 397-8412
Please Distribute**

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for specific incident for situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; no immediate action necessary.



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HEALTH ADVISORY

March 23, 2010

Update on Mercury (Thimerosal) Limits Suspension for H1N1 Vaccine

Starting March 24, providers will no longer be allowed to administer H1N1 vaccine that contains thimerosal to pregnant women and children under three. This marks the end of a temporary suspension of Washington's law limiting the amount of thimerosal allowed in H1N1 vaccine for people in these groups.

The Department of Health suspended the state limit in September due to the H1N1 outbreak and vaccine production delays that limited the supply. That six-month suspension applied only to H1N1 vaccine. The goal was to remove a barrier so that people in these groups who wanted the vaccine could choose to could get the shot fairly quickly.

Washington State currently has low levels of flu activity and plenty of H1N1 vaccine available to order—including mercury-free. Providers who need additional vaccine to comply with the law can contact their local health agencies. For contact information see www.FluNewsSWSWashington.org or call one of the numbers below:

Clark County Public Health: 360-397-8403

Cowlitz County Health Department: 360-414-5599

Skamania County Health Department: 509-427-3881

Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services: 360-795-6207

Preservative-free presentations of H1N1 vaccine available for ordering by Washington providers and LHJs include CSL .5mL single dose preservative free pre-filled syringes (licensed for ages 6 months and older) and Novartis .5mL single dose preservative free pre-filled syringes (licensed for ages 4 years and older).

State law allows Washington's secretary of health to suspend the mercury limit when there's a shortage of vaccine or during a disease outbreak. The Department of Health will continue to monitor the situation—these limits could be suspended again if another vaccine shortage or outbreak develops.

Meanwhile, please continue to encourage everyone to get vaccinated if they haven't yet. While flu activity in our state has dropped, low levels of H1N1 disease are still circulating. Vaccination is the best protection against H1N1. Please remind parents to get their children vaccinated with the second dose for their children under 10, if they haven't done so. Pregnant women should also make sure they get vaccinated.

The Department of Health Web site (www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/Immunize/providers/h1n1-thimerosal.htm) has more information. If you have questions, contact Janna Bardi, Immunization Program CHLD Profile manager, at janna.bardi@doh.wa.gov or 360-236-3568.