



MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON

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Recommendations for influenza vaccination expanded *Prevention is key*

While influenza activity in Oregon and across the country continues to be widespread, a panel of immunization experts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) voted to expand the recommended ages for annual influenza vaccination to include all children from six months through 18 years of age. The previous recommendation was for vaccination of children from six months to 59 months of age.

Health officials believe the new recommendation should decrease the risk of illness for children of all ages, reducing the need for unscheduled medical visits, missed school days, and parents/caregivers missing work. Additionally, there is strong evidence that reducing influenza transmission among children has the potential to reduce influenza among household contacts and within the community at large.

According to Lillian Shirley, Multnomah County Health Department Director, "Along with recommended vaccinations, everyone is encouraged to practice basic preventative measures such as covering your cough, washing your hands and staying home if you are sick. These simple measures provide additional protection to the entire community."

Full implementation of the expanded vaccination recommendation is expected by fall 2009, allowing time to plan for the vaccination of this large group of children.

For more information on immunizations/vaccinations, visit the Health Department's website at www.mchealth.org or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/flu/

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News Release

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