

Pneumococcal Immunization Resource Kit

Patient Letter Template # 2

Dear Member:

You have probably heard a lot about how to protect yourself and your family from the Pandemic Influenza H1N1 (formerly known as the swine flu). For instance, you can wash your hands often and avoid contact with sick people. However, you might not have heard about another important way to prevent the most common complication of the flu – getting a pneumococcal vaccination.

Many of the people who have died from Pandemic H1N1 Influenza have the same long-term health issues that also make them more likely to suffer or die from pneumococcal disease. Getting a pneumococcal vaccine now can prevent complications caused by Pandemic H1N1 Influenza and protect you against pneumococcal disease throughout the year.

Pneumococcal vaccinations are recommended for:

- All infants and children under 5 years of age.
- People over the age of 65.
- People age two or older who:
 - Have long-term health issues such as diabetes; chronic lung disease; cirrhosis; alcoholism; and heart, kidney or liver disease.
 - Have Hodgkin’s disease, lymphoma, leukemia, HIV infection, or AIDS.
 - Receive long-term steroids, certain cancer drugs, or radiation therapy.
- People older than 19 years of age who smoke and/or have asthma.
- People who live in nursing homes or other long-term care homes.

Pneumococcal vaccines work and are safe. Because of the pneumococcal vaccine that is given to children younger than 5 years of age, there are 80% fewer cases of severe cases of this disease in children. Patients in the hospital who have received a pneumococcal vaccine are also up to 70% less likely to develop serious case of disease that could lead to death than those who have not. Most side effects don’t last long and are minor, such as swelling where the shot is given.

Protect yourself and family against pneumococcal disease. Talk to your healthcare provider about a pneumococcal immunization today. ***HEALTH PLAN ADDS INFORMATION ABOUT COVERAGE FOR PNEUMOCOCCAL VACCINATIONS HERE***

To learn more about pneumococcal immunizations, visit the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Immunization Program’s website at www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip.

In Health, Medical Director

This customizable template was provided for use by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. Please feel free to customize this letter and provide it to members.

To download additional resources for promoting pneumococcal immunizations, visit www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip.

Questions about the “Pneumococcal Immunization Resource Kit” may be directed to Julia Heinzerling, M.P.H. at jheinzerling@ph.lacounty.gov or 213-351-7479.

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