

What you need to know about H1N1 Influenza Vaccine

(also known as "Swine Flu")



WHAT IS H1N1 INFLUENZA?

The 2009 H1N1 influenza (sometimes called Swine Flu) is caused by a new strain of influenza virus. Because it is a new virus, most people have no immunity and it has spread very rapidly. The 2009 H1N1 influenza is spread in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing by people with flu. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something - such as a surface or object - with flu viruses on it and then touching their eyes, nose or mouth.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF H1N1 INFLUENZA?

The symptoms of H1N1 influenza are similar to seasonal flu. These include: fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue, muscle aches, headache, chills, sneezing and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE H1N1 INFLUENZA?

Promptly consult with your healthcare provider. He/She may prescribe antiviral medications. If so, be sure to complete the full course of medication.

HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF AND MY FAMILY AGAINST H1N1 INFLUENZA?

- Cough or sneeze into the corner of your elbow or use a tissue, throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often, with soap and water. Hand sanitizer may be used.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Stay home until you are fever free for 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medicines.)
- Take antiviral medication when prescribed by health professionals.
- Get vaccinated when vaccine is available.

WHAT ARE THE TWO TYPES OF H1N1 VACCINES AVAILABLE?

The "flu shot" is an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle, usually in the arm. The flu shot is approved for use in all people older than 6 months. The "nasal-spray" is a vaccine made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu. It is approved for use in healthy people 2 to 49 years of age who are not pregnant.

HOW IS THE H1N1 INFLUENZA VACCINE DIFFERENT FROM THE SEASONAL FLU VACCINE?

The H1N1 influenza vaccine is just another flu vaccine. It is manufactured the same way as the seasonal flu vaccine. The H1N1 influenza strain would likely have been included in the seasonal flu vaccine if the pandemic had occurred earlier.

IS THE H1N1 INFLUENZA VACCINE SAFE?

The H1N1 influenza vaccine is as safe as the seasonal flu vaccine. H1N1 influenza vaccines are manufactured and tested in the same way as the seasonal flu vaccine. Many millions of doses of seasonal flu vaccine are distributed every year and have been for many years.

WILL THE SEASONAL FLU VACCINE ALSO PROTECT AGAINST THE H1N1 INFLUENZA VIRUS?

No. Everyone over age 6 months is encouraged to get both vaccinations as they become available.

CAN I GET BOTH THE SEASONAL FLU AND H1N1 INFLUENZA VACCINE AT THE SAME TIME?

Seasonal flu and H1N1 influenza shots can be given on the same day, but should be given in different arms. A vaccine shot and a vaccine spray can be taken at the same time. Seasonal flu and H1N1 influenza nasal spray vaccines should be separated by 3 to 4 weeks.

HOW MANY DOSES OF THE H1N1 INFLUENZA VACCINE WILL I NEED?

In adults, only one dose of H1N1 influenza vaccine is needed. All children less than age 10 years, in order that they be properly immunized, will require two doses of H1N1 influenza vaccine (either the shot or the nasal spray). Be sure to get children less than age 10 years the second dose 3 to 4 weeks after the first dose.

WHY SHOULD I GET VACCINATED AGAINST H1N1 INFLUENZA?

Influenza vaccination is the best way to prevent getting the flu. Although H1N1 influenza has been fairly mild in most people, it has caused some hospitalizations and deaths in children and adults. People with chronic medical conditions are at the highest risk, but some hospitalizations and deaths have occurred in persons who were previously in good health.

WHO SHOULD RECEIVE THE H1N1 INFLUENZA VACCINE FIRST?

- Pregnant women.
- People who care for infants under age 6 months.
- Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel.
- All people ages 6 months to 24 years.
- People ages 25 to 64 years who have chronic health conditions or compromised immune systems.

After these priority groups are vaccinated, vaccination is recommended for everyone over age 6 months.

SHOULD PREGNANT WOMEN BE VACCINATED AGAINST H1N1 INFLUENZA?

Yes. Both seasonal flu and H1N1 influenza shots are highly recommended for pregnant women. Pregnant women have six times the risk of complications from H1N1 influenza than other people.

SHOULD CHILDREN BE VACCINATED AGAINST H1N1 INFLUENZA?

Yes. All people ages 6 months to 24 years are in the priority group for early vaccination. Since the outbreak began in April 2009, there have been 86 confirmed deaths in children in the United States age 18 years and younger; 50 of these deaths occurred over two months--September and October 2009. In addition, young persons have the highest infection rates, and can spread influenza to friends, family and others.

SHOULD PEOPLE AGE 65 OR OLDER BE VACCINATED AGAINST H1N1 INFLUENZA?

Yes. Seniors should be vaccinated against H1N1 influenza. People age 65 or older may have some immunity against H1N1 influenza and are less likely to become infected. For this reason, seniors are not in the first priority groups to receive H1N1 influenza vaccinations.

WHEN WILL I BE ABLE TO GET THE H1N1 INFLUENZA VACCINE?

All people who choose to be vaccinated will have the opportunity to be vaccinated. Initial doses of vaccine are being directed to the priority groups previously listed.

WHERE CAN I GET THE H1N1 INFLUENZA VACCINE?

We expect vaccine to be available at local retail pharmacies, private healthcare providers and at various public sites in our communities (public points of dispensing or PODs). Sites will be announced as they become available. Broward County Public School and participating Charter and Private School students will be offered voluntary "in school" H1N1 influenza vaccinations.

IS THERE A CHARGE TO BE VACCINATED FOR H1N1 INFLUENZA?

There will be no fee for vaccination at public points of dispensing or schools participating in "in school" vaccinations. Private providers may charge patients an administration fee. This fee can be billed to Medicaid, Medicare and private insurance.

WILL MY CHILDREN RECEIVE BOTH VACCINES (SEASONAL FLU AND H1N1 INFLUENZA) AT SCHOOL?

The Broward County Health Department will be providing H1N1 influenza vaccine in Broward County Public Schools and participating Charter and Private Schools with parental consent. Seasonal vaccines are available at local retail outlets or private healthcare providers.

IS VACCINATION FOR H1N1 INFLUENZA MANDATORY?

No. The vaccination for H1N1 influenza is VOLUNTARY, just like the seasonal flu vaccine. Vaccination is the best defense against H1N1 influenza. The vaccine will be available to anyone who wants it and the decision to get vaccinated is up to each individual, parent, or guardian. If you have questions about whether you should get the vaccine, please consult with your healthcare provider.

WILL THERE BE ENOUGH H1N1 INFLUENZA VACCINE FOR EVERYONE?

It is expected that there will be enough H1N1 influenza vaccine for everyone who chooses to get vaccinated.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

Broward County Health Department: www.browardchd.org

The Florida Department of Health: www.myflusafety.com

The toll free 24/7 Florida Flu Information Line, 1-877-352-3581

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: www.flu.gov



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Promoting, protecting and improving the health of all people in Broward County.