

Frequently Asked H1N1 Questions

How can I protect myself against the H1N1 flu?

- 1) Take time to get vaccinated if you fall into one of the risk groups.
- 2) Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. Wash your hands often with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand cleaners when soap and water aren't available.
- 3) Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are spread this way.
- 4) Try to avoid close contact with sick people.

Who should get the H1N1 Vaccine?

Those at greatest risk include:

- Children and young adults (ages 6 month through 24 years)
- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than six (6) months of age (e.g. parents, siblings, child care workers)
- Health care and emergency medical services workers
- People ages 25 through 64 years who have certain chronic health conditions such as asthma, COPD, HIV, diabetes, heart disease or lung diseases.

Are there some people who should not receive this vaccine?

People who have a severe (life-threatening) allergy to chicken eggs or to any other substance in the vaccine should not be vaccinated.

Are there any side-effects from getting the vaccine?

Some minor side effects that could occur are:

- Soreness, redness or swelling where the shot was given
- Fever (low grade)
- Aches
- Nausea

If these problems occur, they begin soon after the shot and usually last 1 to 2 days. Almost all people who receive influenza vaccine have no serious problems from it.

Is the vaccine safe?

Each year, the CDC looks at the strains of influenza that are circulating and the ones most likely to be in the population. Those strains are then put into the flu vaccine. H1N1 influenza was identified as the strain for 2009. The vaccine was made using the same production facilities with the same companies and with the same methods as seasonal influenza vaccine. Seasonal influenza vaccines are highly effective in preventing influenza disease. The expectation is that a vaccine against 2009 H1N1 influenza will work in a similar fashion to the seasonal influenza vaccines. CDC and FDA believe that the benefits of vaccination with the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine will far outweigh the risks.

What are the symptoms of H1N1 Flu?

The symptoms of this flu are similar to seasonal flu, but they may be more severe. Symptoms include: fever (usually high), coughing and/or sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headaches and/or body aches, chills & fatigue and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea.

What do I do if I get sick?

If you have been diagnosed with H1N1 (swine) flu, you should stay home, follow your doctor's orders, and watch for signs that you need immediate medical attention. CDC recommends that you stay home at least 24 hours after your fever (100°F or 37.8°C) is gone except to get medical care or for other things you have to do and no one else can do for you. Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine, such as Tylenol. You should stay home from work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings.

Do I still need the seasonal flu shot?

Yes. The H1N1 shot does not protect against seasonal flu. It is recommended that you get both shots, especially if you are in one of the high risk groups listed above.

Can I get the H1N1 shot at the same time as the flu shot?

Simultaneous administration of inactivated vaccines against seasonal and the 2009 H1N1 influenza viruses is permissible if different anatomic sites are used (for example, one vaccine in each arm).

How soon after getting the shot will I be protected?

In most people, the vaccine provided an immune reaction within 2 weeks.

Where can I get more information about H1N1?

Visit www.flu.gov for more information about H1N1.

Source: Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.