

H1N1 (Swine Flu) Information Sheet:

- The new vaccine has been approved, the first doses should be available on October 15th, 2009
 - Seasonal Flu vaccine does not prevent H1N1 flu. Both vaccines will be necessary to protect you against both types of influenza. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has not yet released recommendations on the spacing between administration of the two vaccines
- There are few known potential side-effects of the H1N1 vaccine. Side effects will be continuously monitored once the vaccination program proceeds.

The groups recommended to receive the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine include:

- **Pregnant women** because they are at higher risk of complications and can potentially provide protection to infants who cannot be vaccinated;
- **Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age** because younger infants are at higher risk of influenza-related complications and cannot be vaccinated.
- **Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel** because infections among healthcare workers have been reported and this can be a potential source of infection for vulnerable patients
- **All people from 6 months through 24 years of age**
 - **Children from 6 months through 18 years of age** because cases of 2009 H1N1 influenza have been seen in children who are in close contact with each other in school and day care settings, which increases the likelihood of disease spread, and
 - **Young adults 19 through 24 years of age** because many cases of 2009 H1N1 influenza have been seen in these healthy young adults and they often live, work, and study in close proximity, and they are a frequently mobile population; and,
- **Persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza.** (e.g. diabetes, kidney failure, chronic heart disease, chronic lung disease such as asthma, emphysema or chronic bronchitis, patients on immunosuppressive medications such as prednisone, anti-organ transplant rejection medications or patients with immune deficiency disease like HIV)

Note: No shortage of 2009 H1N1 vaccine is expected, but vaccine availability and demand can be unpredictable. There is some possibility that initially, the vaccine will be available in limited quantities. So, the CDC also made recommendations regarding which people within the groups listed above should be prioritized if the vaccine is initially available in extremely limited quantities.

Frequently Asked Questions

Will the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccines be safe?

We expect the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine to have a similar safety profile as seasonal flu vaccines, which have a very good safety track record

What is the best source of information for 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine safety?

In addition to talking openly with your healthcare providers, CDC also encourages you to stay informed by checking the following Web sites often for the most up-to-date news and information: www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu and www.flu.gov.

What are the presenting signs and symptoms of H1N1 influenza?

Patients with uncomplicated disease due to confirmed influenza A (H1N1) virus infection have experienced fever, chills, headache, upper respiratory tract symptoms (cough, sore throat, runny nose, shortness of breath), diffuse body aches, fatigue, vomiting, or diarrhea

How long is a person with the H1N1 flu contagious?

The duration of shedding with H1N1 flu is unknown. Therefore, until data are available, the estimated duration of viral shedding is based upon seasonal influenza virus infection. Infected persons are assumed to be shedding virus from one day prior to illness onset until resolution of symptoms. In general, persons with H1N1 virus infection should be considered potentially infectious from one day before to 7 days following illness onset. Children, especially younger children, might be infectious for up to 10 days.

How can I protect myself from catching this flu virus?

There are everyday common sense actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause such respiratory illnesses. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- 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, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Avoid close contact with people who appear unwell and who have fever and cough.
- Practice good health habits including adequate sleep, eating nutritious food, and keeping physically active.

Frequently Asked Questions continued

What do I do if I think I have H1N1 flu?

If you feel unwell, have high fever, cough and/or sore throat:

- **Stay at home** and keep away from work, school or crowds as much as possible.
- Rest and take plenty of fluids.
- Cover your mouth and nose with disposable tissues when coughing and sneezing and dispose of the used tissues properly.
- Wash your hands with soap and water frequently and thoroughly, especially after coughing or sneezing.
- Inform family and friends about your illness and seek help for household chores that require contact with other people such as shopping.

Which antibiotics should I take to treat the infection?

Antibiotics are generally prescribed to treat bacterial infections. They have no role in the treatment of influenza except in unusual cases where both the virus and a bacterial infection co-exist. There are however two anti-viral medications with known efficacy against this virus. Both Tamiflu ® and Relenza ® have proven effective. Not all patients with the H1N1 flu however require these medications and therefore you should check with your doctor concerning your individual need.

How long should patients receive treatment with antiviral drugs?

The recommended duration of treatment is five days. However, hospitalized patients with severe infections might require longer treatment courses.

I am over 65 and have been told always to receive a seasonal flu shot. Do I need to receive the H1N1 vaccine?

Persons over age 65 with no serious chronic medical illness are not listed in the “at risk” groups for H1N1 infection. However, once all of the “at risk” groups have been vaccinated, the H1N1 vaccine will be made available to the older Americans if they chose to receive it.