

Fact Sheet on 2009 Flu Vaccines

Will there be two different vaccines this fall?

Yes. There will be one vaccine for the seasonal flu. There will be a different vaccine for the H1N1 flu. The H1N1 vaccine is not intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccine – it is intended to be used along-side seasonal flu vaccine. Both will be needed to be protected against the flu.

How many total shots will be needed?

For most people, the seasonal flu vaccine will require just one vaccination, as in previous flu seasons. The H1N1 flu vaccine is expected to be given in two vaccinations, probably three weeks apart.

When will vaccine be available?

Vaccine for seasonal flu will be available earlier than H1N1 vaccine. It will be available in September. There is no vaccine available right now to protect against the 2009 H1N1 virus. However, a H1N1 vaccine is currently in production and is expected to be ready for the public by mid to late October.

Is it too early to get a seasonal flu shot?

It is not too early to get seasonal flu vaccine as soon as it is available in September. The protection you get from the vaccine will not wear off before the flu season is over.

Who should get vaccinated?

Seasonal flu vaccine is recommended for all people over 6 months of age.

Initially, the H1N1 vaccine will focus on populations at higher risk of disease or serious complications:

- All people 6 months through 24 years of age
- People who live or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- All pregnant women
- Healthcare and emergency services personnel
- People aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza

Once demand for prioritized groups has been met, people ages 25 through 64 years should be vaccinated for H1N1. Vaccine should also be offered to people 65 years and older as demand for vaccine for younger age groups is being met.

Is it possible to get vaccinated for H1N1 flu and seasonal flu at the same time?

It is anticipated that seasonal flu and novel H1N1 vaccines will be able to be given on the same day. The federal government will make a final decision after testing for the H1N1 vaccine is completed.

Will the H1N1 flu vaccine be safe?

The H1N1 flu vaccines will be very much like seasonal flu vaccines, which have a very good safety record. However, no vaccine is 100% safe. This will be no exception. Those who choose vaccines for themselves or their children will be screened for contraindications such as egg

allergies and will get information sheets describing the vaccine's risks and benefits, signs and symptoms of adverse events to look for following vaccination, and how to report adverse events.

Is the flu vaccine a guarantee against getting the flu?

Influenza viruses are constantly changing and can change after the vaccine has already been produced for that season, so there is always the possibility of a new strain of the virus appearing that is not covered by the vaccine. However, vaccine prevents many illnesses and flu-related complications and can provide cross-protection against related flu viruses.

What if I am concerned about thimerosal?

We expect that the H1N1 vaccines will be available in multiple formulations, including a formulation that does not contain the preservative thimerosal.

Sources: 1) Questions and answers 2009 H1N1 flu (swine flu) and you (08/05/2009), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm>. 2) Novel 2009-H1N1 Influenza Updated Key Points August 14, 2009, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

