

What is the single best way to stay protected against the flu virus?

The influenza vaccine is the single best way to protect against the flu. However, covering your coughs and sneezes and frequently washing your hands will also help keep you healthy.

How many flu vaccines do I need this year?

You should receive 2 different flu vaccines this year:

1. The seasonal vaccine, which will protect you from getting the seasonal flu viruses
2. The 2009 H1N1 vaccine, which will protect you from getting 2009 H1N1 influenza (commonly called the "swine flu")

Seasonal and 2009 H1N1 flu vaccines protect against different flu viruses. It is important to get both vaccines to be protected this flu season.

How many flu vaccines does my child need this year?

Children should receive both flu vaccines this year:

1. The seasonal vaccine, which will protect your child from getting the seasonal flu virus
2. The 2009 H1N1 vaccine, which will protect your child from getting the 2009 H1N1 virus (commonly called the "swine flu")

Children 6 months through 9 years of age will need 2 doses of the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine. These 2 doses should be separated by 4 weeks. Persons 10 years of age and older will need just 1 dose. Some children may need 2 doses of seasonal flu vaccine, too. Contact your health care provider or local health department for more information.

I've heard that certain groups of people should receive the 2009 H1N1 vaccine first. Who are they and why?

We expect there will be enough 2009 H1N1 vaccine for everyone who wishes to be vaccinated. However, certain people are more likely to be affected by the disease and have serious complications. Therefore, it is important that these people be given the vaccine first. This includes:

1. **Pregnant women** because they are at higher risk of complications and can potentially provide protection to infants who cannot be vaccinated;
2. **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. Vaccination of those in close contact with infants younger than 6 months old might help protect infants by "cocooning" them from the virus;
3. **Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel** because infections among healthcare personnel have been reported and this can be a source of infection for

vulnerable patients. Also, increased absenteeism in this population could reduce healthcare system capacity;

4. 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. They often live, work, and study in close proximity, and they are a frequently mobile population; and,

5. Persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with a higher risk of complications from influenza.

Why aren't people age 65 years and older in the initial target groups for H1N1?

Currently, the majority of 2009 H1N1 flu cases are in people under 50 years of age and the average age of hospitalization for 2009 H1N1 flu is 37 years of age. Scientists believe that people over 50 may have some immunity to 2009 H1N1 influenza.

2009 H1N1 flu seems to be affecting younger persons more than the elderly, so CDC has not recommended vaccinating people age 65 years and older, initially. However, CDC expects eventually to have enough vaccine for anyone who wants it. People age 65 years and older should be able to get vaccinated if they want to be.

Is the 2009 H1N1 vaccine safe?

Yes, the 2009 H1N1 vaccine is made and tested using the same processes as the seasonal flu vaccine. Millions of doses of seasonal flu vaccine have been distributed every year for many years. Seasonal flu vaccines have a long and well-established safety record. As with all vaccines, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are closely watching for any side effects associated with both seasonal and 2009 H1N1 vaccines. Vaccine safety is always monitored as part of any vaccination program.

Does 2009 H1N1 vaccine contain thimerosal?

Some of the 2009 H1N1 vaccine contains thimerosal, and some doesn't. The goal of the vaccination program is to have enough doses to give to everyone who wants the vaccine. In order to achieve that, the majority of the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine will come in multi-dose vials. It will need to contain a preservative (thimerosal) so vaccine from the same vial is not contaminated. However, some vaccine will be packaged in single-dose syringes or nasal sprayers. Vaccine packaged in

that way will not need to contain a preservative (thimerosal), and can be used to vaccinate young children and pregnant women.

Thimerosal has been used since the 1930s to prevent contamination of vaccines and other medical products. Current scientific research reviewed by CDC, the MDCH, and national health organizations shows no evidence of harm caused by small amounts of thimerosal in vaccines, beyond possible minor reactions like redness and swelling at the injection site.

When should I get the vaccines?

Both vaccines are available now. The sooner you get the vaccines the sooner you will be protected from getting influenza. Get vaccinated with seasonal flu vaccine now. The first doses of 2009 H1N1 vaccine have been targeted to high risk persons (see above.) In the near future, there will be enough 2009 H1N1 vaccine available for anyone wanting to receive it.

Can I get both vaccines at the same time?

Yes, but it depends on the kind of vaccine. **Flu shots** (seasonal and 2009 H1N1) can be given at the same time. A flu shot can also be given with nasal flu vaccine. But both nasal vaccines **CANNOT** be given at the same time. If nasal vaccine is preferred, the doses should be separated by at least 4 weeks.

Can anyone get nasal flu vaccine?

No. Only healthy, persons 2 through 49 years of age who are not pregnant can receive nasal flu vaccine.

Are there any side effects to the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine?

The most common side effects include soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given, fainting (mainly adolescents), headache, muscle aches, fever, and nausea. If these problems occur, they usually begin soon after the shot and last 1-2 days. Runny nose and headache may happen after getting nasal flu vaccine. Life-threatening allergic reactions to vaccines are very rare.

Can flu vaccines give me the flu?

No. The viruses in both flu vaccines – seasonal and 2009 H1N1 - cannot cause disease. Flu shots contain inactivated or killed viruses. If you get nasal flu vaccine, the virus is live but weakened, so it can't grow in your lungs and cause illness.

Sometimes people think that they may have gotten the flu from flu vaccine. Flu vaccinations are usually done at the same time of year when cold and other viruses are circulating so a cold or other illness could be mistaken for the flu. Some people may get a mild fever or have muscle aches for a



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short time right after being given flu vaccine. This does not mean you have gotten flu from the vaccine. Repeated studies have shown that flu vaccines do not cause illness.

How much does the vaccine cost?

Seasonal flu vaccine is covered by many health insurance plans and by the Vaccines for Children program for children under 19 years of age who are on Medicaid, uninsured, underinsured, and Native American or Alaskan native. There may be a fee for administration.

The 2009 H1N1 vaccine is free for everyone. There may be an administration fee charged to you or your insurance company by your medical provider.

Where can I get the vaccines?

Contact your health care provider or local health department to receive the influenza vaccines. You can also check the Michigan Department of Community Health web site at www.michigan.gov/flu or at www.flu.gov for more information.