



H1N1 Flu Vaccine – Frequently Asked Questions

October 12, 2009

When will the H1N1 flu vaccine become available?

The first doses of H1N1 (swine) flu vaccine have arrived in Contra Costa and will be distributed through previously scheduled school-based clinics. Many more doses will be available by the end of October and will be distributed to providers throughout Contra Costa. Contra Costa County expects to receive enough vaccine for all those who want the vaccine.

Where can I get vaccine?

The best place to get H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccine is from your health care provider. Call ahead of time to see if they are offering either vaccine. Depending on vaccine supplies, H1N1 vaccine may be offered at the Contra Costa Public Health drive-through clinics. Check www.cchealth.org for details.

Will the seasonal flu vaccine protect me from H1N1 flu?

No. You will need two different vaccines to protect yourself from the seasonal flu and the H1N1 flu. Neither vaccine is a substitute for the other.

Can I receive the H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccines on the same day?

Yes, as long as one of the vaccines is a shot. You cannot receive two nasal mist vaccines on the same day.

Who should get the H1N1 flu vaccine?

Everyone is recommended to get the H1N1 flu vaccine, to protect themselves and the community by stopping the spread of the H1N1 flu. There are certain groups of people who are more vulnerable to severe disease and should be sure to get the vaccine as soon as possible:

- pregnant women
- children and young adults ages 6 months to 24 years old
- adults ages 25-64 who have chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems

There are also certain groups who should get vaccinated to help prevent passing the flu to others including:

- health care workers
- emergency medical services personnel
- those who care for young children under 6 months of age

How many doses of H1N1 flu vaccine do I need?

Children six months through nine years of age will need two doses at least one month apart. People ten years of age and older need one dose.



If I was vaccinated against swine flu in 1976, do I need the H1N1 vaccine?

Yes. This H1N1 flu virus is different from the virus that was circulating in 1976, so that vaccine will not protect you from this new H1N1 flu.

Will it be safe to get the H1N1 flu vaccine?

Yes. Prior to release, vaccines are tested for safety and effectiveness in clinical trials. All licensed vaccines are held to very high standards of quality and safety. So far there have been no reports of severe reactions to the H1N1 flu vaccine.

Will people be required to receive H1N1 flu vaccine?

Vaccination will not be required for anyone. However, vaccines offer the best protection against flu for yourself and the whole community.

I am a health care provider. How do I request vaccine?

Health care providers and organizations interested in providing the H1N1 vaccine can pre-register to receive vaccine and place initial vaccine requests at www.calpanflu.org

What should I do if I get sick with H1N1 flu before I get the vaccine?

If you get sick with H1N1 flu, contact your health care provider. Your health care provider will determine whether you should be treated with an antiviral medication, such as Tamiflu. Do not go to the emergency room unless you have a medical emergency. Do not return to work or school until you have had no fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

If I already had H1N1 flu, do I still need the vaccine?

Yes. There is not enough evidence that your body will build up enough immunity to protect you from getting sick a second time.

What else can I do to prevent the spread of H1N1 flu?

Continue to practice good hygiene. This means washing your hands often, covering your coughs and sneezes, and staying home from school or work if you are sick.

Where can I get more information about the situation in Contra Costa County?

To stay updated on H1N1 flu and its vaccine, visit www.cchealth.org or call the Health Emergency Information Line at 1-888-959-9911. H1N1 flu information is also posted to Twitter at www.twitter.com/CoCoHealth and Facebook (Contra Costa Health Services).