

KNOW THE FACTS!

H1N1 (Swine) Flu Vaccine

H1N1 (referred to as “swine flu” early on) is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This virus is spreading from person-to-person, in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread. This is a respiratory illness; swine influenza viruses are not transmitted by food or eating pork products.

Public health agencies are closely monitoring the H1N1 flu situation. Scientists and public health experts advise that this is a rapidly evolving situation and guidance could change. Everyone is encouraged to visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/ for detailed, up to date information.

WHAT CAN A PERSON DO TO PREVENT THIS ILLNESS?

There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illness like H1N1 flu. Parents should use this time to teach their children proper hygiene habits to stay healthy:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not near by, use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If a tissue is not available, use the inside of your elbow to cover your cough or sneeze, not your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people. Try to stay 6 feet away from people who are coughing or sneezing.
- If your child is sick, they should stay home until their fever is gone for at least 24 hours.
- Receive the H1N1 flu vaccine, when available. Getting your child vaccinated is very important in controlling the severity of illness in our community.

IS THERE A VACCINE FOR H1N1 FLU?

Vaccines are the most powerful public health tool for control of flu, and the U.S. government is working closely with manufacturers to produce ample supplies of the H1N1 vaccine.

Hamilton County Public Health is working with schools, physicians and health centers to assure people have access to the vaccine.



PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

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WHEN WILL THE H1N1 FLU VACCINE BE AVAILABLE?

We anticipate the first shipment of H1N1 flu vaccine to arrive in mid-October. The vaccine is likely to be available in limited, staggered weekly increments.

WILL THERE BE ENOUGH H1N1 VACCINE?

Vaccine availability is likely to be limited at first, therefore people at the highest risk for illness will be first priority to receive the H1N1 vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identified high-risk groups that are a priority to receive the H1N1 vaccination.

WHO SHOULD GET THE VACCINE?

CDC identified several priority groups that are recommended to receive the H1N1 vaccination:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- Health care and emergency services personnel who have direct patient contact
- **Persons between the ages of 6 months through 24 years of age**
- People ages 25 through 64 years with chronic health disorders or weakened immune systems

IS THE VACCINE MANDATORY?

No, the vaccine is not mandatory. Some parents may choose to not have their child vaccinated; it is their choice.

WHY SHOULD MY CHILD RECEIVE THE H1N1 VACCINE?

Like seasonal flu, H1N1 flu can be a serious contagious disease. An important step in protecting your child from H1N1 flu is to receive the H1N1 flu vaccine.

Immunizations are one of the most effective ways to prevent serious illness in children and adults. Pediatric immunization programs in the United States have been quite successful in reducing the number of children affected by highly contagious diseases, including measles, rubella, mumps and polio.

WHY IS THE VACCINE BEING ADMINISTERED IN SCHOOL?

School age children are among the key populations identified by CDC as being at higher risk of disease and who are likely to come in contact with H1N1 flu. When vaccine is first available, it is recommended that these populations be vaccinated first.

In order to administer vaccine as efficiently as possible, Hamilton County Public Health is working with local schools on vaccination clinics. We hope this will be a minimal interruption to students' regular schedules while providing protection to thousands of children from H1N1 flu.

School-based H1N1 vaccine clinics also ensure that physician offices and health centers will be available to provide vaccine to younger children and those with chronic health conditions.

IS THIS AVAILABLE TO ALL SCHOOL CHILDREN?

Hamilton County Public Health has offered to coordinate H1N1 flu vaccine clinics to all public, private and parochial schools in our jurisdiction (this excludes the cities of Cincinnati, Sharonville, Springdale and Norwood – these areas have separate health departments and are making plans with schools in their jurisdictions).



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WHAT IS THE COST?

Vaccine administered as part of school-based H1N1 flu vaccination clinics will be provided free of charge.

CAN I BE PRESENT WHILE MY CHILD GETS THE VACCINE AT SCHOOL?

Parents may accompany their child to school for the vaccination, in accordance with school policies. Since there is a limited supply of vaccine, nurses will only be able to administer vaccine to enrolled students.

WHAT IF MY CHILD IS UPSET?

Nurses will not be able to administer vaccine to children that are unruly or uncooperative. Teachers, room moms and adult volunteers will be available to comfort children.

CAN I HAVE MY CHILD VACCINATED AT THE PHYSICIAN'S OFFICE RATHER THAN AT SCHOOL?

Yes, the child may receive the vaccination through their primary care provider (pediatrician or family physician). You will need to contact their office to inquire about vaccine availability.

IF MY CHILD IS VACCINATED AT THE PHYSICIAN'S OFFICE, DOES THE SCHOOL NEED A RECORD?

No, the school does not need a record if the child receives the H1N1 vaccine from their primary care provider. A record should be kept with the child's normal immunization and medical records.

CAN MY OTHER CHILDREN GET THE VACCINE AT THE SCHOOL CLINIC?

School-based clinics will only serve to vaccinate the students attending the school/school district. Others in the key populations are encouraged to seek the vaccine through their health care provider.

HOW MANY DOSES OF H1N1 FLU VACCINE WILL BE NEEDED?

Preliminary clinical trial results indicate that one dose will be effective for healthy children ages 10 to 17. Children 6 months to 9 years old are likely to require two doses depending on health history. This is similar to CDC recommendations for seasonal flu vaccine.

WHY DO YOUNGER CHILDREN NEED TWO DOSES?

Young children do not have as mature an immune system as adults and may not have had prior exposure to flu. The likelihood that you have had exposure to flu virus increases with age.

Young children also need two doses of the seasonal flu vaccine the first time they receive it. This is the normal recommendation each flu season.

WHEN WILL THE SECOND DOSE BE PROVIDED?

The second dose of H1N1 flu vaccine will need to be administered 21 days after the first dose is received. Hamilton County Public Health will also coordinate school-based vaccination clinics for students that meet this requirement.

WILL SEASONAL FLU VACCINE BE OFFERED IN SCHOOLS?

No, Hamilton County Public Health will not administer seasonal flu vaccine in schools. We encourage families to seek the vaccine through their normal flu vaccine provider.



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WILL THE SEASONAL FLU VACCINE ALSO PROTECT AGAINST THE H1N1 FLU?

The usual seasonal influenza viruses are still expected to cause illness this fall and winter. Individuals are encouraged to get their seasonal flu vaccine as soon as it is available from their regular flu shot provider.

The seasonal flu vaccine is not expected to protect against the H1N1 flu. Children will need to receive additional vaccine to protect against seasonal flu. As well, the H1N1 flu vaccine is not expected to protect against seasonal flu. Contact your healthcare provider or visit www.hamiltoncountyhealth.org to find seasonal flu vaccine locations.

CAN THE SEASONAL FLU VACCINE AND THE H1N1 FLU VACCINE BE GIVEN AT THE SAME TIME?

Preliminary clinical trial results indicate that H1N1 flu and seasonal flu vaccines will be safe and effective if given at the same time.

WHEN SHOULD SEASONAL FLU VACCINE BE RECEIVED?

Families are encouraged to seek seasonal flu vaccination as soon as it is available. It is not too early to get a seasonal flu vaccine. The protection you get from the vaccine will not wear off before the flu season is over.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH H1N1 FLU VACCINE?

During clinical trials, no serious adverse effects were identified with H1N1 flu vaccine. This vaccine has a very similar profile to seasonal flu vaccine. However, there is always some degree of redness and swelling with all injections – H1N1 flu vaccine should be no different. Visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/vaccine_safe_ty_qa.htm for more information.



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