

H1N1 (Swine Flu) and Flu Prevention

Influenza, including H1N1 (swine flu), is an illness that can be prevented by vaccination. "Getting the flu vaccine is the best way to protect you and your family from flu," says the American Academy of Pediatrics. More H1N1 vaccine should be available each week so don't give up on getting a shot for your child. "H1N1 (swine flu) is widespread throughout (much) of the country now and could continue until spring." Because the vaccine supply has been limited, people at highest risk of serious illness from the flu have had priority in receiving the vaccine. These people are:

- Children 6 months through 4 years old
- Parents and caretakers of infants younger than 6 months
- Pregnant women
- Health care workers and emergency services personnel
- Children 6 months and older with chronic health conditions

As the supply increases, everyone 6 months through 24 years old and adults who are 25 through 64 with chronic medical conditions also should be vaccinated, the academy says.

How many doses are needed?

Children 9 and younger will need two doses of H1N1 (swine flu) vaccine to receive the most protection against the virus. Ideally, they should get the second dose four weeks after the first dose. For vaccine given by injection, the second dose may be given as early as 21 days after the first dose. For the nasal spray vaccine, it is best to wait at least 28 days between doses.

People ages 10 and older need one dose of H1N1 (swine flu) vaccine.

Both kinds of vaccine are safe and effective, but:

- Children ages 6 months through 2 years, pregnant women and anyone with a chronic medical condition cannot get the nasal vaccine and must get the flu shot.
- Healthy people 2 through 49 years old may receive the nasal spray vaccine.

It's also important to get seasonal flu vaccine, which is a separate vaccine from the H1N1 flu vaccine. Pediatricians recommend all children ages 6 months through 18 years receive seasonal flu vaccine every year.

Because H1N1 vaccine only recently has become readily available, and because so many say they will not be vaccinated even though the supply has improved, it's worth talking about other ways to prevent the spread of swine and other influenzas. Children who are in school and other group activities should know that a few simple steps, provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, will help to protect them and everyone around them from flu of all kinds:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and then throw the tissue away.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing.
- If you're sick, stay home and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

For more help, go to:

- www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu
For "FluView," which gives current key flu indicators, or to learn more, click on this link or call 1-800-CDC-INFO .
- [H1N1: A Parents Guide](#)
CBS News compiled these tips for preventing your children from getting the H1N1 virus and what to do if they get sick.
- Flu.gov
This site provides comprehensive government-wide information on seasonal, H1N1 (swine), H5N1 (bird) and



Family Online Resource

www.deltonaFORyou.org

pandemic influenza for the general public, health and emergency preparedness professionals, policy makers, government and business leaders, school systems, and local communities.

- Kidshealth.org
"Right now, there's no evidence that H1N1 flu is any worse — or more dangerous — than the common seasonal flu. ... Still, it's important to take precautions."

Local Resources

- www.volusiahealth.com
The Volusia County Health Department has free flu prevention materials available in English and Spanish, including "H1N1 Flu Vaccine and You." Other free flu prevention materials available in English and Spanish, include "A Flu Shot Every Year," "Why Get a Yearly Flu Vaccine" and "Yearly Flu Shots for Children." Available workbooks for children are: "Let's Stop Germs," "About Washing Hands," "Clean Hands are Healthy" and "Know What? We Fight Germs." Contact administration assistant Barbara O'Connor at 386-274-0500, Ext. 7011, to arrange a pickup.
- <http://volusia.org/09-15b-09.htm>
The "Let's Fight Flu Together" campaign is a partnership of the Volusia County Health Department and Volusia County Emergency Services Management. Public health updates, tips for businesses to have a "flu plan" as well as the opportunity for parents and individuals to sign up online for email updates regarding the flu as well as information about the Speakers Bureau (free presentations can be scheduled).