



## **Frequently Asked Questions About H1N1 (swine) Flu**

### **Vaccine**

#### **When is the H1N1 swine flu vaccine going to be available?**

Currently vaccine is being distributed to health care providers, including pharmacies. Health department clinics are located in Daytona Beach, Deland, Deltona and New Smyrna and all have ample quantities of nasal spray (live) vaccine and injectable (dead) vaccine for the general public. Check with your health care provider for vaccine availability and our website [www.volusiahealth.com](http://www.volusiahealth.com), or call 1-866-821-7704 for clinic locations, vaccination days and time.

#### **Can the public sign up on a waiting list to receive the vaccine?**

No. Please check our website [www.volusiahealth.com](http://www.volusiahealth.com) for updates or call 1-866 821-7704.

#### **Can the H1N1 vaccine be given at the same time as the seasonal flu vaccine?**

Yes. H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccine can be given at the same time if the vaccines are inactivated (dead) and are injected at different places on the body. The two types of vaccine should not be given at the same time if they are attenuated (alive - nasal). Your doctor will know what kind of vaccine s/he is using and whether the two types can be given at the same time.

#### **Are there some people who should not receive this vaccine?**

People who have a severe (life-threatening) allergy to chicken eggs or to any other substance in the vaccine should not be vaccinated. Also, tell the person giving the vaccine if you have ever had a life threatening allergic reaction after a dose of seasonal vaccine or Guillain Barre Syndrome (GBS). Please consult your doctor with questions and concerns.

#### **Is the nasal spray flu vaccine as effective as the flu shot?**

Yes. Studies show it is very effective against influenza disease.

## Is the vaccine safe?

The 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccines are expected to have similar safety profiles as seasonal flu vaccines, which have very good safety track records. Over the years, hundreds of millions of Americans have received seasonal flu vaccines. CDC expects that any side effects following vaccination with the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine would be rare. If side effects occur, they will likely be similar to those experienced following seasonal influenza vaccine. Mild problems that may be experienced include the following.

**The flu shot:** The viruses in the flu shot are killed (inactivated), so you cannot get the flu from a flu shot. Some minor side effects that could occur are:

- soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given
- fever (low grade)
- aches
- nausea

**The nasal spray flu vaccine (also called LAIV or Flu Mist):** The viruses in the nasal-spray vaccine are weakened and do not cause severe symptoms often associated with influenza illness. (In clinical studies, transmission of vaccine viruses to close contacts has occurred only very rarely.)

In children, side effects from LAIV can include:

- runny nose
- wheezing
- headache
- vomiting
- muscle aches
- fever

In adults, side effects from LAIV can include:

- cough
- fever
- sorethroat
- headache

If these problems occur, they usually begin soon after the shot and last 1-2 days. Life-threatening allergic reactions to vaccines are very rare. If they do occur, it is usually within a few minutes to a few hours after the shot is given. After vaccination you should look for any unusual condition, such as a high fever or behavior changes. Signs of a serious allergic reaction can include:

- difficulty breathing, hoarseness or wheezing,
- swelling around the eyes or lips, hives,
- paleness, weakness, a fast heart beat or dizziness.

If any unusual condition occurs following vaccination, seek medical attention immediately. Tell your doctor what happened, the date and time it happened, and when the vaccination was given. Ask your doctor, nurse, or health department to report the reaction by filing a Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS)

form. Or you can file this report yourself through the VAERS Web site at [www.vaers.hhs.gov](http://www.vaers.hhs.gov). You may call 1-800-822-7967 to receive a copy of the VAERS form. You can also call the Florida State Department of Health 1-877-352-3581. VAERS is not able to provide medical advice.

### **Who can receive the LAIV (nasal spray vaccine)?**

Healthy non-pregnant people 2-49 years of age without any chronic health conditions.

### **Can the nasal spray be given to patients when they are ill?**

People with mild illnesses, e.g. diarrhea or mild upper respiratory tract infection, with or without fever may receive the nasal spray vaccine. Vaccination may need to be delayed for persons who have an illness with nasal congestion because of the interference of vaccine delivery. If you are moderately or severely ill you might be advised to wait until you recover to receive the vaccine.

### **After receiving the nasal spray can I have contact with people who cannot receive the nasal spray?**

Yes. Except, avoid close contact with persons who have a severely weakened immune system requiring care in a protective environment such as a bone marrow transplant unit.

### **How many doses is the H1N1 vaccine?**

It is 1 dose for individuals 10 years and older and 2 doses for children through 9 years. The doses should be separated by 28 days. The second dosage will be offered by private providers and health department locations.

### **Who should get a flu vaccine?**

The priority groups for H1N1 vaccine administration:

- Pregnant women
- People who care for or live with children younger than 6 months of age
- Healthcare and emergency services personnel
- People 6 months through 24 years of age
- People aged 25 through 64 years with health conditions associated with a higher risk of medical complications with the flu.

These are the groups currently most affected by H1N1. The identification of priority groups is not intended to deny 2009 H1N1 vaccine to anyone who wishes to be vaccinated. The vaccine is available to all people 6 months and older. The U.S. government has purchased enough 2009 H1N1 vaccines for all those who choose to get vaccinated.

**People over age 65 are not in a priority group for the vaccine even if they have a chronic medical condition that places them at high risk of flu complications. Why not?**

Thus far the illness, complications and deaths associated with the 2009 H1N1 flu have occurred mostly among individuals born after 1957. Individuals born before 1957 were likely exposed to flu strains similar to the current H1N1 swine flu and have some immunity. However, vaccine is now available to everyone who wants it, including individuals over the age 65.

**Illness**

**How does H1N1 virus spread?**

Spread of H1N1 virus occurs in the same way that seasonal flu spreads. Flu viruses are spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing by people with influenza. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something – such as a surface or object – with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth, nose or eyes.

**What can I do to prevent the flu?**

- Cover your nose or mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective if you cannot access a sink.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are spread that way.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Contact your doctor if you have fever and flu symptoms.

**What are the symptoms of H1N1 Swine Flu?**

The symptoms of H1N1 swine flu in people are similar to the symptoms of the seasonal flu and include sudden onset of fever (100°F or greater), cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with H1N1 swine flu. Like seasonal flu, H1N1 swine flu may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions.

**What should I do if I was exposed to someone with the flu?**

People who are at high-risk of complications from flu infection should consult with their doctor. They include:

- Children younger than 2 years old
- Pregnant woman
- Adults 65 years and older

**AND/OR**

People with:

- Chronic pulmonary disorders, including asthma, chronic bronchitis and emphysema

- Heart disease
- Renal conditions— end stage kidney disease, diabetes
- Neuromuscular disorders including:  
Multiple sclerosis, Muscular dystrophy, seizure disorders, spinal cord injuries
- Chemotherapy, organ transplant, or cancer
- Cognitive dysfunction
- Immune suppression including those caused by HIV infection
- Persons younger than 19 years of age on long-term aspirin therapy

### **What should I do if I get sick?**

If you become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever (100°F or greater), body aches, runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting or diarrhea, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever or do not feel feverish, without using fever-reducing drugs. For example, if you still have a fever after the fever reducing drug (i.e. Tylenol) wears off, you should continue to stay home. If you have severe illness or you are at high risk of flu complications, contact your health care provider or seek medical care.

### **I have flu-like symptoms, should I go to the emergency room?**

You should call your regular healthcare provider before going to the emergency room, even if it is at night or on the weekend unless you are experiencing symptoms of severe illness. Healthcare providers have systems in place to respond to their patients' needs during times when the office isn't open.

Symptoms of severe illness include:

- Children
  - Fast breathing or trouble breathing
  - Bluish skin color
  - Not drinking enough fluids
  - Not waking up or not interacting
  - Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
  - Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
  - Fever with a rash
- Adults
  - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
  - Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
  - Sudden dizziness
  - Confusion
  - Severe or persistent vomiting

### **How long can an infected person spread this virus to others?**

People infected with seasonal and H1N1 flu shed virus and may be able to infect others from 1 day before showing symptoms to 5 to 7 days after. This can be longer in some people, especially in children and people with weakened immune systems.

### **How do I care for a sick loved one?**

- Have a plan. Stock up nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand. If you are a “high risk” person, consider finding someone else to care for the ill person
- Limit contact with sick person to one caregiver. Wear a facemask while providing care (if tolerable)
- Wash hands often
- Avoid sharing towels, utensils or linens
- Disinfect surfaces daily
- Ventilate room (weather permitting)
- Monitor for symptoms in yourself and other household members
- Know emergency warning signs

### **I have flu symptoms but my doctor didn't test me for H1N1? Why?**

Currently, most influenza in Florida is caused by the H1N1 Flu virus. So if you have flu-like symptoms, it is very likely you have H1N1 Flu. Remember, your doctor is the expert at diagnosing illnesses and determining what tests should be ordered to you. You and your doctor are partners in your care. Ask questions, follow your doctor's instructions, and be sure you keep your doctor informed of any changes in your condition.

Florida doctors are asked to report people admitted to the hospital with serious illnesses due to H1N1, pregnant women admitted to hospital with such illness; deaths in people with H1N1 Flu, and to notify their County Health Department of influenza outbreaks of which they become aware.

### **Are there medicines to treat 2009 H1N1 infection?**

Yes. However, most people who are generally healthy (do not have serious medical conditions), will get better with rest and time. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines (pills, liquid or an inhaled powder) that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in your body. If you get sick, antiviral drugs can make your illness milder and make you feel better faster. They may also prevent serious flu complications. Your doctor, however, will decide whether you should receive these medications.

It's very important that antiviral drugs be used early to treat flu in people who are very sick (hospitalized) and people who are sick with flu and have a medical condition that puts them at greater risk of serious flu complications. Tamiflu (oseltamivir) or Relenza (zanamivir) are recommended for the treatment and/or prevention of infection with H1N1 flu virus.

### **What causes some people to die from H1N1?**

Many of the people who died had underlying health conditions, and the novel 2009 influenza A (H1N1) virus might not be the final underlying cause of death in all these deaths.

## **Prevention**

### **What household cleaning should be done to prevent the spread of influenza virus?**

To prevent the spread of influenza virus it is important to keep surfaces (especially bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, kitchen counters and toys for children) clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant according to directions on the product label.

### **What kills influenza virus?**

Influenza virus is destroyed by heat (167-212°F [75 -100°C]). In addition, several chemical germicides, including chlorine, hydrogen peroxide, detergents (soap), iodophors (iodine-based antiseptics), and alcohols are effective against human influenza viruses if used in proper concentration for a sufficient length of time. For example, wipes or gels with alcohol in them can be used to clean hands. The gels should be rubbed into hands until they are dry.

### **Should I close my facility/office to decontaminate it?**

No. Clean frequently touched surfaces with the cleaner that you normally use.

### **One of my employees/co-workers has the flu (H1N1). What should I do?**

The person should be excluded from work for at least 24 hours after s/he no longer has fever or does not feel feverish, without using fever-reducing drugs. For example, if the person still has a fever after the fever reducing drug (i.e. Tylenol) wears off, s/he should continue to stay home.

If it is a healthcare worker or a worker in a place where there are a great number of high-risk people that may be exposed, such as organ transplant wards, the employee should stay home for 7 days after symptom onset or for 24 hours after symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.

Any high-risk contacts (defined as those that are pregnant, have immune-compromised disorders such as HIV or cancer, have other serious medical conditions such as but not limited to: severe heart or lung disease, neuromuscular disease, severe diabetes, are younger than 5 years of age or older than 65 years of age, are less than 19 years of age taking long term aspirin therapy and those residing in nursing homes and assisted living facilities) should contact their doctor to discuss the exposure.

No drastic cleaning measures are needed as described previously. Encourage others in the workplace to practice proper hand hygiene and cough etiquette and to stay home if ill.

### **How does H1N1 flu compare to seasonal flu in terms of its severity and infection rates?**

With seasonal flu, we know that seasons vary in terms of timing, duration and severity. Seasonal influenza can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death.

Each year, in the United States, on average 36,000 people die from flu-related complications and more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu-related causes. Of those hospitalized, 20,000 are children younger than 5 years old. Over 90% of deaths and about 60 percent of hospitalization occur in people older than 65.

H1N1 flu has caused greater disease in people younger than 25 years of age than older people. At this time, there are few cases and few deaths reported in people older than 64 years old, which is unusual when compared with seasonal flu. However, pregnancy and other previously recognized high risk medical conditions from seasonal influenza appear to be associated with increased risk of complications from this H1N1 virus. These underlying conditions include asthma, diabetes, suppressed immune systems, heart disease, kidney disease, neurological disorders (i.e. Alzheimer's disease), neuromuscular disorders and pregnancy.

### **Resources**

#### **I have flu symptoms, but have no health insurance and no doctor. Can I come to the health department to see a doctor?**

No. The Volusia County Health Department (VCHD) does not offer influenza testing services nor do they provide primary care for non-VCHD enrolled clients. You should visit the emergency room if your illness is severe. You can also call one of the following primary care clinics that serve individuals with limited health insurance for consultation:

#### **West Volusia**

Pierson Medical Center  
114 N. Volusia Ave.  
Pierson, FL  
(386) 749-9449

DeLand Medical Center  
844 W. Plymouth Ave.  
DeLand, FL  
(386) 738-2422

Deltona Medical Center  
2160 Howland Blvd.  
Deltona, FL  
(386) 532-0515

Good Samaritan Health Clinic  
312 W. New York Ave.  
DeLand, FL  
(386) 738-6990

*\*Must have been a resident of West Volusia for at least 3 months and meet the Federal Poverty level of 200% or below to qualify for services.*

## East Volusia

Halifax Health – Dunn Center  
1455 Dunn Ave.  
Daytona Beach, FL  
(386) 239-6198

*\*Provides preventative and sick care in a primary care setting to chronically ill adults (18+ years)*

Halifax Health – Keech Center  
431 S. Keech St.  
Daytona Beach, FL  
(386) 947-3553  
*\*Provides pediatric primary care*

Halifax Health Managed Care Assistance Program:  
Halifax Health Daytona Beach and Port Orange  
1-800-753-6366  
Call with questions Mon-Fri 9 am -4 pm  
*\*May apply for this program when registering for emergency department services*

Bert Fish Medical Center Community Health Center  
408 Palmetto St.  
New Smyrna Beach, FL  
(386) 427-2285

The Jesus Clinic  
1133 Sixth Street  
Daytona Beach, FL 32117  
(386) 253-6959  
*\*Open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 5 pm – 8 pm by appointment only*

---

### **Where can I go for further information?**

Volusia County Health Department: [www.volusiahealth.com](http://www.volusiahealth.com)

Florida Department of Health: [www.myflusafety.com](http://www.myflusafety.com) or [www.floridashealth.com](http://www.floridashealth.com)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

National website: <http://www.flu.gov>

Toll free H1N1 Information Hotline **1-877-352-3581** Florida Department of Health

Toll free H1N1 Information Hotline **1-866-821-7704** Volusia County Health Department