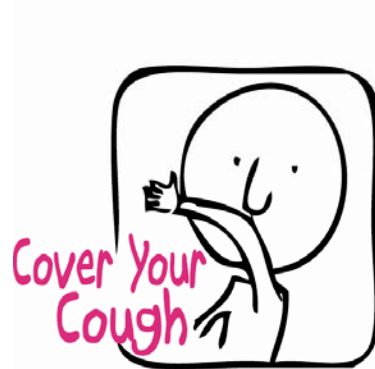


H1N1 (Swine) Flu

Swine Flu Vaccine & Older Adults

Help Us **Shut Down the Flu**



Flu Questions? www.HealthyGH.org

Q: What is 2009-H1N1 (swine) influenza?

A: H1N1 influenza (or “flu”) is a form of the flu that is caused by a newly recognized virus. This virus was originally called the “swine flu” but has since been named H1N1.

2009-H1N1 is a newly recognized virus. It’s very different than the seasonal flu viruses that have been circulating for the past several decades. Since the virus was identified in May, we have seen that it causes much more illness in young people than in people over 65. **Most of the people who have become seriously ill with H1N1 flu are younger than 50.**

Q: What about seasonal flu vaccine?

A: Every year we provide a vaccine that protects people against the three major seasonal flu strains that are expected that winter. One shot of this vaccine provides protection for several months until the flu season is over.

This year we recommend that all people over age 65 get a shot against the seasonal flu at their first opportunity. **There is no shortage of seasonal flu vaccine this year.** The seasonal flu shot does NOT provide protection against 2009-H1N1.

Q: Is there a vaccine for 2009-H1N1?

A: A vaccine is being produced now for 2009-H1N1. The first doses are expected to be available in October. Two shots of this vaccine are required for protection.

The first doses will be set aside to protect people who have the highest risk of severe disease or complications from the flu, such as pregnant women and children. **Within a few weeks after the first doses are given, we expect that there will be enough H1N1 vaccine for everybody who wants a shot to get one.** Medicare part B will cover the cost of the H1N1 vaccine.

Q: Why aren't people over age 65 on the list? We are always told to get a flu shot every year.

A: People over 65 are strongly encouraged to get the seasonal flu vaccine every year. That's because about 90% of severe disease from seasonal flu happens in people over age 65.

Months of tracking this virus all over the world have shown us that **very few severe cases of H1N1 disease occur in people over age 50.** It is thought that this may be because older people had a similar flu virus many decades ago.

People over 65 aren't first on the list to get the H1N1 vaccine, but vaccine will be available to them as soon as the targeted groups have had the chance to get the shot.

Q: What can we do to stop the spread of the flu?

- A:**
- Stay home if you're sick. Avoid exposing others until you have been free of fever for 24 hours.
 - **Wash your hands often**, especially after coughing or sneezing and before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Use hand sanitizer if you can't wash your hands.
 - Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue. If you don't have a tissue, cough into your sleeve.
 - Ask people around you to do the same!
 - Get a seasonal flu shot at your first opportunity.
 - Get the H1N1 shot if you desire when it becomes available.