

Seasonal and H1N1 (Swine) Flu:

What should I do if I have flu symptoms?

Not all patients with suspected seasonal or H1N1 (Swine) flu need to be seen by a doctor. If there are no underlying chronic health conditions you can usually treat yourself or your child at home by getting plenty of rest and drinking lots of fluids. You most likely do **NOT** need to see a provider if:

- You are age 5 to 65 years
- You have no chronic medical illness
- Your fever has lasted less than 4 days
- You are not having difficulty breathing
- You have no mental confusion or difficulty thinking
- Your skin color is normal
- You are not dizzy
- You are not vomiting

When should I see a doctor?

You or your child **should** see a healthcare provider for an evaluation if you are experiencing any of the following:

- You have a fever greater than 100-degrees that's lasted more than 4 days (fevers may be intermittent)
- Your fever went away but has returned two or more days later
- You are coughing up mucus tinged with blood
- You have rattling chest sounds when taking a deep breath
- You are experiencing fainting spells, dizziness and/or severe dry mouth
- You are urinating less (or babies have less than 3 wet diapers per 24 hours)
- You are in a high risk group for complications from the flu:
 - Pregnant women: *pregnant patients, who are not in labor, should seek immediate or urgent care if influenza symptoms are present, rather than making an appointment at an OB office.*
 - People less than age 5 or more than age 65
 - People with chronic medical illness

If you leave the house to seek medical attention, wear a facemask if available. A healthcare provider can determine whether flu testing or treatment is needed. Antiviral drugs can treat those who are seriously ill.

When should I call 911 or be seen at an emergency room?

You or your child should seek **emergency** medical attention if you are experiencing any of the following:

- You have fast breathing or trouble breathing
- You are feeling pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- You have bluish or gray skin color
- You have severe or persistent vomiting
- You are not waking up or not interacting
- You have sudden dizziness
- You are unable to talk in full sentences
- You are confused
- Children who are so irritable that they do not want to be held

How can I protect myself and my family from getting the flu?

Get a flu shot! Also, wash your hands, don't touch your face and stay away from people who are sick. If you do get sick, stay home so you don't pass it on and always cover your cough.

Should I get a seasonal flu shot, an H1N1 (Swine) Flu shot or both?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) makes recommendations about who should get which shot. There are different target groups for Seasonal flu shots and Swine Flu shots. Seasonal flu and novel H1N1 vaccines may be administered on the same day if you fall into both categories (as long as neither are FluMist – see below). The H1N1 vaccine is not intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccine. It is intended to be used alongside seasonal flu vaccine. The target groups for each are as follows:

Seasonal Flu Shot

- Children aged 6 months to 18 years
- Pregnant women
- People 50 and older
- People with chronic medical conditions
- People who live in nursing homes
- People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu
- Healthcare and emergency services personnel
- People who want to reduce their chances of getting the flu

Swine Flu (H1N1) Flu Shot

- Pregnant women
- People who have contact with children under 6 months old
- People 6 months to 24 years old
- People 25 to 64 years old with chronic health conditions
- Healthcare and emergency services personnel
- School teachers

FluMist vaccine (not a shot) will be available for both seasonal and H1N1 flu prevention. FluMist is an intranasal vaccine only approved for use in individuals 2-49 years of age. FluMist for seasonal flu and H1N1 **may not** be administered on the same day, since they are a live vaccine. FluMist is not intended for pregnant women or patients who have a history of airways disease including asthma, COPD and cystic fibrosis. FluMist is Thimerosal free.

Can a pregnant woman receive the nasal spray vaccine (FluMist)? What about people with close contact to a pregnant woman?

Pregnant women should *not* receive the live nasal spray influenza vaccine. But family and household members and other close contacts of pregnant women (including healthcare personnel) who are age 2 through 49 years old, healthy, and not pregnant, *may* receive live nasal spray vaccine.

How many shots are required?

A seasonal flu shot won't protect you from the H1N1 flu, and an H1N1 shot won't protect you from the seasonal flu. Children younger than 10 years of age will need four shots - two seasonal flu shots and two H1N1 flu shots. Older children and adults will need just two shots -one for seasonal - flu and one for H1N1 flu.

For protection against seasonal flu:

- People age 10 years and older will need one dose
- Children age 9 and under will need two doses separated by at least 21 days

For Protection against H1N1 flu:

- People age 10 years and older will need one dose of H1N1 vaccine
- Children age 9 and under will need two doses of H1N1 vaccine separated by at least 21 days

I got the flu last spring during the H1N1 outbreak. Do I still need an H1N1 shot?

The common test for flu (a rapid Influenza test) *cannot* determine the difference between H1N1 flu and seasonal flu. Neither can diagnoses based on symptoms alone. Unless you had specialized RT-PCR test (which can differentiate between flu viruses) you should get an H1N1 shot. Patients who did have a RT-PCR test that was positive for the novel H1N1 virus are probably immune and do not need to be vaccinated this year.

Is the H1N1 vaccine safe?

According to the New England Journal of Medicine, The manufacturing process for these vaccines is identical to that used for seasonal vaccines, which have a strong record of safety. The H1N1 vaccine tests have generally resulted in minor side-effects and reactions. Pain or tenderness at the injection site has been the most common adverse effect. Although concerns linger about the association of the 1976 swine influenza vaccine with the Guillain–Barré syndrome, the syndrome was rare, with approximately 1 case for every 100,000 persons vaccinated. The rate was even lower among persons under 25 years of age. Also, manufacturing processes have markedly improved since 1976.

For pregnant women, who may be especially concerned about safety, getting an H1N1 flu shot is highly recommended. Pregnant women have the highest risk of complications and death from the H1N1 infection. Newborns are also at high risk, but cannot receive an H1N1 shot since it is only available to babies 6 months or older. By getting an H1N1 vaccination, a pregnant woman can pass on protective antibodies to her baby while still in the womb and eventually to her newborn while breastfeeding. Pregnant women were included in clinical trials of the H1N1 vaccine.

Where can I get an H1N1 flu vaccination?

These details are still being worked out by a partnership of Snohomish County providers that include the Snohomish Health District, Providence Regional Medical Center and The Everett Clinic. Currently we can only answer this question in a “most likely” scenario. In most cases it will depend upon the category of the patient.

- *Pregnant Women* – They will most likely receive the vaccine at their OB office.
- *Children* - At this time, it looks like we will have enough vaccine to handle all children age 6 months to adults age 24 years at community wide vaccination clinics or in their provider’s office if the provider carries the vaccine.
- *Infants* – Babies will likely get H1N1 flu shots in their pediatrician’s office or possibly at mass vaccination clinics.
- *Someone who has contact with children under 6 months old* - Household members who live with an infant 0-6 months of age would be encouraged to get a shot at a mass vaccination clinic or from their provider. This includes daycare providers.
- *People with an underlying health conditions* - Patients with chronic underlying health conditions should be able to get a shot in their provider’s office or at the direction of the provider.
- *Healthcare workers* - Healthcare workers will be vaccinated by their respective health care organizations.
- *School teachers* – School teachers will mostly receive vaccinations at the mass vaccination clinics. School ancillary personnel will not be included in the first round of H1N1 vaccinations, but will be in subsequent rounds.
- *Fire fighters and police officers*- Emergency responders will be included in the first round of vaccinations. The location and logistics of vaccination sites for these groups is being arranged by Stevens Hospital (South Snohomish County) and paramedic organizations in North Snohomish County.
- *Someone who is NOT in a target groups but wants a shot* - They will most likely have to wait until at least the completion of the first round of vaccine release. Once there is enough vaccine available at healthcare providers, H1N1 vaccinations should open up to anyone who wants to avoid the flu and stay healthy.