



## ***2009 H1N1 Influenza Vaccine*** **“Frequently Asked Questions”** ***Wisconsin Division of Public Health***

*Current as of September 24, 2009*



### **Frequently Asked Questions about 2009 H1N1 Influenza Vaccine**

#### **Where's the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine?**

The Food and Drug Administration has approved a 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine. This paves the way for vaccine production. The first limited supplies are expected to arrive early in October.

- Vaccinations will all be voluntary and there will be enough vaccine available for everyone who wants it. However, it will not all be available at once due to a limited initial supply.
- The bulk of vaccine will start arriving by mid-October.
- The federal government has ordered 195 million doses of H1N1 vaccine. In a typical year, 100 million doses of seasonal flu vaccine are administered.
- Because early vaccine shipments to Wisconsin will be limited in early October, the vaccine will be administered first to individuals in the CDC's target groups:
  - Pregnant women
  - Household contacts and caregivers for children less than 6 months old
  - Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel
  - All people age 6 months through 24 years
  - Persons age 25 through 64 years who have conditions associated with higher risk of complications from influenza
- The use of target populations allows public health the ability to reduce the spread of disease and protect those most vulnerable.
- The state's vaccine distribution plan will be divided into three phases:
  - Phase I: Limited supply focused toward vaccinating pregnant women, health care and emergency medical services personnel and if supply allows family members of children < 6 mo.
  - Phase II: Larger supply focused primarily on public health efforts and private care providers to vaccinate remainder of targeted populations.
  - Phase III: Ongoing weekly supply focused on vaccinating remainder of targeted population as well as non-targeted individuals.

## **Will one shot work for both types of flu?**

- The seasonal influenza vaccine will *not* protect against 2009 H1N1 influenza.
- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the use of one dose of 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine for persons 10 years of age and older.
  - Data from trials among children are not available at this time, so dosing schedules for children are not yet known.
  - Data from trials among children will be available soon.
- At this time, FDA has approved two doses for children 9 years of age and younger. As with seasonal vaccine, children ages 6 months through 35 months get two doses of 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine that contains one-half the dose used for older children and adults.
- Since as many as four different flu strains may be making people sick this fall, it is more important than ever this year to get vaccinated against “seasonal” flu.
- Since the seasonal vaccine will be available before the 2009 H1N1 vaccine, you should go ahead and get a seasonal flu shot as soon as it is available to you – and if you are in a high-risk group for severe illness, it is especially important to get your 2009 H1N1 vaccination as soon as it is available to you.
- Initial shipments of the seasonal vaccine are already arriving in Wisconsin. Check with your health care provider and be alert for announcements about special flu shot clinics so that you can get vaccinated.
- Seasonal vaccine is available in most parts of the state.

## **Why won't the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine be available to the general public right away?**

- The goal of both the federal and state government is to use the early vaccine doses to protect those most vulnerable to this specific virus.
- With an earlier vaccine shipment we will have a smaller number of doses available which means we have to make a choice on who to target.
- If we were to use the limited preliminary shipment to hold mass vaccination clinics we would exhaust the supply quickly and only manage to scratch the surface of those in the targeted universe.

## **Why aren't senior citizens among the targeted populations?**

- The use of target populations allows public health the ability to reduce the spread of disease and protect those most vulnerable.
- All of the populations on the targeted list are highly susceptible to the H1N1 virus, whereas those over the age of 65 appear to be resistant to the virus.
- Those over the age of 65 are, however, very susceptible to the seasonal flu which will also be in circulation this fall.
- The seasonal flu vaccine is currently available and it is highly recommended that those over the age of 65 and health care workers who care for seniors get vaccinated for seasonal flu.

## **Why is it so important to vaccinate health care workers right away?**

- Emergency medical services and health care workers are likely to come in contact with influenza viruses as part of their occupation.
- They interact with many patients and other individuals, some of whom are vulnerable to severe complications from influenza infection.
  - If workers are exposed to 2009 H1N1 virus and not vaccinated against it, they can possibly transmit the 2009 H1N1 virus to many others in a healthcare facility and other settings.
  - This could lead to a far greater and more serious outbreak.
- Having a healthy emergency response and health care work force is vital to protecting the health and safety of the public.

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