

New Jersey Dept. of Health and Senior Services
Public Information – Update 16

Date: November 6, 2009
Time: 4:00 PM

H1N1 Influenza and Vaccination Program

Note to operators: When people call asking questions that are specific to their personal situation, tell them that we cannot provide advice about how to manage a particular individual. The decision on how best to manage a particular individual must be made in conjunction with the individual's health care provider.

2009 H1N1 INFLUENZA

H1N1 VACCINE SAFETY

[NEW] How do you know that GBS isn't related to vaccination? And what about miscarriages?

Adverse events - such as sudden deaths, spontaneous abortions, and Guillain-Barré syndrome - will occur in the population. These adverse events will happen regardless of whether people have been vaccinated for H1N1. In the context of vaccine safety monitoring, we call these naturally occurring events "background rates." Background rates are helpful as a tool to assess vaccine safety by comparing the expected rate of adverse events to the actual/observed rate in any given timeframe once vaccination begins.

H1N1 VACCINE PRIORITY GROUPS

[UPDATED] I am not in a priority group. Will I get turned away at the clinic? When do I get vaccinated?

The H1N1 vaccine is currently available in limited amounts. So yes, you will likely be turned away from clinics that are, at this time, focusing on the target priority groups. After individuals in the priority groups in NJ who want the vaccine have received it, the vaccine will then be available to others. There is expected to be enough vaccine available to vaccinate everyone who wants it. Shipments of the vaccine continue to arrive each day; please be patient and continue to check availability on [://nj.gov/health/](http://nj.gov/health/).

SEASONAL FLU VACCINE

[NEW] Because of the shortage of seasonal flu vaccine, the NYC health department has suspended the recommendation to vaccinate healthy, non-elderly adults. Will NJ be doing that, too?

At this time, NJ has no plans to do that.

If H1N1 is the predominant flu virus that is circulating, why do I need a seasonal flu shot?

Seasonal flu viruses will also be circulating. The H1N1 flu vaccine does not protect you from them. Only the seasonal flu vaccine will do that.

ANTIVIRALS

[UPDATED] How soon after taking influenza antiviral drugs am I able to get vaccinated?

If a person is taking an influenza antiviral drug (including Tamiflu® or Relenza®), then the nasal mist (live) flu vaccine should not be given until 48 hours after the last dose of the influenza antiviral medication was given. *Antiviral drugs can be taken with the inactivated (killed) flu vaccine.*

H1N1 ANIMAL ISSUES AND CONCERNS

[UPDATED] Can domestic animals catch this virus and get sick? Can they catch it and pass it on to people without getting sick?

Yes, some animals have been found to have contracted the H1N1 virus, and it has caused respiratory illness in some, but not all, of them. The illness is usually mild and the majority of ill animals have recovered. Most of the infected animals had been exposed to ill humans and appear to have caught it from them. At this time, there is no evidence that the virus has been passing from animal to animal, or that animals have infected humans. The fact that there are very few reports of illness in animals despite the large number of cases in humans, and the frequent interaction between animals and people, indicates that animals are not easily infected and do not appear to play a role in the spread of the disease. Federal and state agriculture and health officials will continue to monitor and study the H1N1 situation in animals.

So far, the 2009 H1N1 flu virus had been found in pigs, birds, ferrets and a cat. Since some viruses can pass between people and animals, this was not an altogether unexpected event. Pet owners should monitor their pets' health very closely, no matter what type of animal, and visit a veterinarian if their pet shows any signs of illness.

ADDITIONAL H1N1 INFORMATION/RESOURCES

Where can I learn more?

The CDC website will be providing daily updates regarding the status of this flu investigation in the US. They also have information posted such as questions and answers regarding Novel Influenza A (H1N1).

The web address is: [.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://cdc.gov/h1n1flu/).

For NJ information, go to: [://www.nj.gov/health/flu/h1n1/](http://www.nj.gov/health/flu/h1n1/)