



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
MENTAL HYGIENE**

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Vaccines against Seasonal Influenza and Novel H1N1 Influenza What You Need to Know

Who should get a seasonal influenza vaccine?

Anyone concerned about being ill with influenza and transmitting it to others can get the seasonal influenza vaccine. Vaccination is especially important for people in the following groups:

- Pregnant women
- All health care workers
- Anyone 6 months through 18 years of age
- Anyone 19 through 49 years of age who has an underlying health condition that increases the risk of complications from influenza (see box)
- Adults 50 and older
- Anyone who lives with or cares for children less than five years old, especially infants younger than 6 months

Health conditions that increase the risk of influenza complications

- Asthma and other chronic respiratory conditions
- Heart, kidney or liver disease
- Hematologic diseases, such as sick cell anemia
- Metabolic disorders, such as diabetes
- Weakened immune system, from illness or medication
- Neuromuscular disorders that interfere with breathing or the discharge of mucus
- Pregnancy
- Long-term aspirin therapy in people under 19

What is the difference between the flu shot and the nasal-spray vaccine?

The shot is made from killed influenza virus that alerts the body's defenses when injected into a muscle. The nasal spray contains live but weakened influenza virus that survives long enough in the nostrils to provoke that same response. Healthy people between the ages of 2 and 49 can receive the vaccine in either form. However, pregnant or breastfeeding women, babies less than 2 years old, and people with long-term health conditions should receive only the shot, not the nasal spray. Talk to your doctor to determine which is best for you.

Will my seasonal vaccination protect me against H1N1 influenza?

No. Seasonal influenza vaccine does not protect against the H1N1 virus. To protect against both kinds of influenza, people will need two different vaccinations: one for seasonal influenza, and one for H1N1 influenza. A new H1N1 vaccine has been developed and will be available this fall.

Who should receive the new H1N1 vaccine?

As the H1N1 vaccine becomes available, people in these groups should receive it in addition to a seasonal flu vaccination:

- Pregnant women
- All health care workers
- Anyone 6 months through 24 years of age
- Anyone 25 through 64 years of age who has an underlying health condition that increases risk of severe illness or complications (see box above)
- Anyone who lives with or cares for children less than 6 months old

Who should *not* get a H1N1 or seasonal influenza vaccine?

- Anyone who has a serious allergy to eggs
- Anyone who has had a serious allergic reaction or other problem after receiving an influenza vaccine in the past
- Anyone with an acute illness, such as a cold or fever (the person can be vaccinated after he or she feels better).
- Anyone who has experienced Guillain-Barré Syndrome

When should I get my influenza vaccine(s)?

Influenza viruses are always changing. To maintain your protection, you need a different vaccine each year. The vaccine starts to protect you after one to two weeks. Influenza is most common in the United States from December to April. It is best to get vaccinated in the fall, but you can be vaccinated through late spring. People 9 and older need only one seasonal flu shot each year, while children less than 9 years old will need two shots (given at least four weeks apart) if they are being vaccinated for the first time. Children less than 9 years old will also need two H1N1 flu vaccines given at least four weeks apart.

Where can I receive the seasonal flu and H1N1 flu vaccines?

Primary-care doctors will offer the seasonal vaccine and H1N1 vaccine. Check to see if your regular health care provider has them. If you don't have a regular doctor, you can call 311 or go to nyc.gov/flu. As the vaccine supply increases, public clinics and commercial pharmacies will also offer the seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 vaccine

Will the vaccines keep me from getting influenza this year?

The seasonal flu vaccine protects against several of the most common strains of influenza that could circulate this fall and winter. Because new influenza viruses appear every year, the effectiveness of the vaccine varies from one year to the next. But even when a vaccine doesn't provide complete protection, people who are vaccinated tend to experience milder illness, and less hospitalization, than others. Other viruses can cause

influenza-like illness, and influenza vaccines do not protect against these infections. You cannot get influenza from the killed or weakened viruses used in vaccines.

Can other vaccines be given at the same visit?

Yes, children can receive all routinely scheduled vaccines along with the flu shot.

What are the risks from influenza vaccine?

The risk of harm from influenza vaccines is much smaller than the risk from the disease. Serious vaccine side effects are possible but extremely rare. Most side effects are mild and last one to two days. The most common ones are fever, aches, and swelling or soreness at the site of the injection.

Tell your doctor or nurse if you:

- Have a serious allergy to eggs
- Ever had a serious allergic reaction or other problem after getting influenza vaccine
- Were ever paralyzed with Guillain-Barré Syndrome
- Are currently feeling sick

What to do if someone experiences a serious reaction:

- Call a doctor or get the person to a doctor right away.
- Write down what happened and the date and time it happened.
- Ask the doctor, nurse or health department to file a Vaccine Adverse Event Report form (vaers.hhs.gov, 800-822-7967, or 212-676-2288).

For additional information or to find out where you can get vaccinated, call 311 or visit nyc.gov/flu.

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