

# 2009 H1N1 and Seasonal Flu Vaccines

## Why should pregnant women get the H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccines?

Pregnant women who get any type of flu are more likely to be hospitalized because of severe symptoms and health problems. Also, death from H1N1 has occurred in more pregnant women compared to the general population. So far, 6% of the people who have died because of the H1N1 flu have been pregnant women. Getting vaccinated is the single best way to protect against the flu.

## Is there a particular kind of flu vaccine that pregnant women should get?

There are two types of flu vaccine—the “flu shot” and nasal spray.

The flu shot is made of dead or killed flu virus and is given with a needle, usually in the arm. The flu shot **is approved** for pregnant women.

The nasal spray is made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu. The nasal spray vaccine is currently **not approved** for pregnant women.



## Will the seasonal flu vaccine also protect against the 2009 H1N1 flu?

The seasonal flu vaccine will not protect against the 2009 H1N1 flu. Also, the H1N1 flu vaccine will not protect against seasonal flu.

## Can the seasonal flu vaccine and the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine be given at the same time?

Seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 vaccines may be given on the same day but must be given at different places on the body (one shot in the left arm and the other shot in the right arm). The seasonal flu vaccine will be available earlier than the H1N1 flu vaccine. Pregnant women should get their seasonal flu vaccine as soon as possible. They should also get the H1N1 vaccine as soon as it becomes available.

## Is the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine safe for pregnant women?

The seasonal flu shot is proven safe and is already recommended for pregnant women. The 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine is made by the same companies that make seasonal flu vaccines and is also recommended for pregnant women.



## What safety studies have been done on the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine and have any been done in pregnant women?

A number of research studies which test the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine in healthy children and adults are underway. Studies of 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine in pregnant women are expected to begin in September.



## How many doses of the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine will be needed?

At this time, only one shot to prevent H1N1 is needed for adults.

## Should the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine be given to someone who has had a flu-like illness between April and now?

Pregnant women should receive the 2009 H1N1 vaccine, even if they have had a flu-like illness in recent months. If a woman is certain she had 2009 H1N1 flu based on a lab test that can detect the virus, a vaccine is not needed. However, there is no harm in getting the vaccine even if you had 2009 H1N1 flu in the past.

## What are the possible side effects of the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine?

The side effects from 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine are expected to be like those from seasonal flu vaccines, including soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given. Some people might experience headache, muscle aches, fever, nausea and fainting. If these problems occur, they usually begin soon after the shot and may last 1-2 days. Like any medicines, vaccines can cause severe allergic reactions. People should always inform their health care provider if they have any severe allergies and if they've ever had a severe allergic reaction after having a flu vaccine. Anyone who has a severe allergy to eggs should not get the vaccine.

## What are the symptoms of 2009 H1N1 flu?

Symptoms of H1N1 flu are like typical seasonal flu symptoms (i.e., cough, sore throat, runny nose and fever). Other symptoms can include body aches, headache, fatigue, vomiting and diarrhea. Many pregnant women with H1N1 will experience nothing more than the typical flu-like symptoms. However, some pregnant women may get sicker than others and develop serious problems like pneumonia. Sometimes severe illness in a pregnant woman can cause problems for her baby, resulting in poor pregnancy outcomes.



### What should I do if I think I have the flu?

Pregnant women who have H1N1 flu symptoms should contact their health care provider to get tested. However, treatment should not be delayed while waiting for test results. This is because antiviral treatment is most helpful when it is started soon (within 48 hours) after the pregnant woman gets sick.

Treatment includes:

- Reduce fever right away with Tylenol® (acetaminophen)
- Drink plenty of fluids
- Your doctor will decide if you need antiviral drugs. Current research shows that antiviral medications for the flu are safe during pregnancy. If you have side effects when taking antiviral drugs, call your doctor right away.

### Are there other ways to reduce risk for pregnant women?

You can reduce your risk for flu by washing your hands often, covering your mouth while coughing, avoiding large crowds during flu season, and staying away from persons with flu-like symptoms.

Vaccination of close contacts of pregnant women (i.e., spouse, other children, parents, and caregivers) will also help both the pregnant woman and her newborn avoid being infected with the flu.



### Where can I get the 2009 H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccines?

Visit the Utah Flu Vaccine Locator at <http://www.immunize-utah.org> to find a clinic near you. The 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine should be available around mid to late October. You can also call your Local Health Department for information about where you can get the vaccines.

### What if I am breastfeeding?

Women who are breastfeeding and have the flu can continue to nurse, even while taking antiviral medications. Nursing moms who are ill with the flu should take steps to reduce the risk to their infants, such as frequent hand washing and by wearing a mask. Nursing may pass antibodies to the baby, which might help to protect the baby from the flu.



**Additional information about influenza is available at:**

**<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/pregnancy/>**

**<http://health.utah.gov/epi/h1n1flu/>**

**For questions about flu  
please call the  
Pregnancy Risk Line at  
1-800-822-2229  
Salt Lake Area  
801-328-2229**

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**What Every Pregnant  
Woman *Must* Know**

