

Are you prepared for the 2009-2010 flu season?

Novel H1N1 influenza (swine flu) brings new challenges

As you know, seasonal influenza (flu) begins in the fall of each year. The viruses change each year, so an annual vaccine is needed to reduce illness and death from the flu.

But this year there is a new influenza strain, novel H1N1 (swine) flu, in addition to the seasonal flu virus. Most people have little or no immunity to this new virus, so it could cause even more infections than the seasonal flu virus.

What this means for you

To protect yourself and those around you this flu season, you may need up to 3 different vaccinations. The table below explains current recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Talk with your doctor about what vaccines you need and other precautions you can take this flu season. For up-to-date information as it becomes available, visit the CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/flu.

To protect against:	Do you need a vaccine?
<p>Seasonal flu (Can affect up to 20% of our population, and is responsible for 36,000 deaths and more than 200,000 hospitalizations each year)</p>	<p>As usual, the CDC recommends yearly vaccination for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children 6 months to 18 years old • Persons 18 through 49 years of age with chronic health conditions • All persons age 50 and older • Pregnant women <p>Best time to be vaccinated – Ideally in early fall.</p>
<p>Novel H1N1 flu (Unlike the seasonal flu virus, the H1N1 virus is affecting the younger population. For this reason, persons 65 and older are not in a high priority group to receive this vaccine)</p>	<p>Currently, the CDC recommends vaccination for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnant women • Household contacts and caregivers of children under 6 months of age • Healthcare and emergency service personnel • All people 6 months through 24 years of age • Persons age 25 through 64 who have chronic health conditions
<p>Pneumonia (Influenza increases risk for pneumonia, and the H1N1 virus makes that risk even greater this flu season)</p>	<p>Vaccine recommended (depending on previous vaccination history) for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons 65 and older • Persons age 2 through 64 years with chronic health conditions • Persons age 19 through 64 years who smoke or have asthma <p>Best time to be vaccinated – Vaccine is available year round. This flu season, it's best to be vaccinated as soon as possible.</p>

The information presented is intended for general information and educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice of your health care provider. Contact your health care provider if you believe you have a health problem. Aurora Health Care is a not-for-profit health care provider and a national leader in efforts to improve the quality of health care.