

H1N1 Flu Frequently Asked Questions

Q: When will vaccines for the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus be available?

A: CDC estimates that approximately 45 million doses of H1N1 influenza vaccine will be available in late October. Once the vaccine is available, vaccination of the initial target groups should begin immediately.

Q: Who will be targeted to receive the vaccine?

A: Initial target groups are 1) pregnant women; 2) people who live with or provide care for infants younger than age 6 months (e.g. parents, siblings, day care providers); 3) healthcare and emergency medical services personnel; 4) children and young adults ages 6 months through 24 years; and 5) people ages 25-64 who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications.

Q: If I'm a high-risk or considered to be in the initial target group, should I be concerned with coming to school (attending class) or work if H1N1 is present?

A: We strongly encourage you to talk with your personal physician or health care provider.

Q: Can I get the H1N1 vaccine if I'm not in one of the initial target groups?

A: Once vaccination programs and providers are meeting the demand for vaccine among the persons in the five initial target groups, vaccination should be expanded to all persons.

Q: Why are pregnant women prioritized for vaccination?

A: Data from early 2009 H1N1 influenza cases in the U.S. show that pregnant women account for a disproportionate number of deaths, making them a high-priority group for vaccination.

Q: Will the vaccine be available for healthy people ages 25 years and older (who are not in targeted groups)?

A: Once it has been determined that the H1N1 influenza vaccine demand for the 5 target groups has been met, the vaccine may be administered to healthy people.

Q: Is the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine experimental?

A: No. The vaccines are undergoing additional clinical trials at this time to determine the size of the dose and the number of doses that will be needed for protection.

Q: If I received the seasonal flu shot, do I need to receive the H1N1 vaccine?

A: Yes. Studies suggest that vaccination with a seasonal flu shot will not provide protection against the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus. Persons who are in a risk group to receive the H1N1 vaccine should be vaccinated.

Q: The District was hit pretty hard last spring at the high schools. Will we close schools if we have a large outbreak of H1N1 influenza?

A: While we recognize the need to balance the risks of illness among students and staff with the benefits of keeping students in school, at this time we do not anticipate closing schools in the event of an H1N1 outbreak. We remain vigilant in our response and contingency plans, including developing “continuity of learning” options for students who are out of school for a period of time, use of substitutes in the event of widespread employee illness, priorities for cleaning impacted schools, and back-up plans in the event a large-scale flu outbreak occurs.

Q: I’m an employee of Bloomington Public Schools, what happens if I’m sick and I have to stay home for 5-7 days, which is the average time for the H1N1 flu to run its course?

A: To reinforce, the District will send students and staff home if they become ill at school with influenza-like illness (fever of 100 degree or greater, and/or sore throat, cough). You must remain home for at least 24 hours AFTER the fever is gone without fever reducing medicine. For many, this will be 5-7 days. Employees should consult their union contract for specific criteria and language related to sick leave.

Do you have a question not addressed here? Please send your questions to commrelations@bloomington.k12.mn.us Thanks.