

# Pandemic H1N1 Vaccine

## What You Should Know

### → It's your best defense.

Vaccines prepare our bodies to fight against disease. Getting vaccinated is the best way to prevent the flu and keep from spreading it to others. Other ways to stay healthy are:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use gel sanitizers.
- If you're sick, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever ends.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.



### → It won't give you the flu.

The vaccine does not cause the flu.

You may have minor side effects after vaccination because:

- Getting vaccinated can trigger the body's immune system to respond. This may cause symptoms like a mild fever. However, these symptoms are not the flu.
- You might have been infected with the flu before your vaccine started working (the vaccine takes up to 2 weeks to work).
- You might be infected with a different type of flu than what you were vaccinated against.

### → It's safe.

Since vaccines are given to millions of healthy people each year, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires them to meet higher safety standards than other drugs. The 2009 pandemic H1N1 vaccine is made in the same way as seasonal flu vaccine, which has an excellent safety record. Studies show that the pandemic H1N1 vaccine is as safe as the seasonal flu vaccine. Doctors will be collecting data on any adverse reactions and sharing these reports with the public.

Some flu vaccines have a preservative called thimerosal. This is added to vaccines to keep them germ-free in the vial. There is no scientific evidence that vaccines that have thimerosal are harmful to anyone, including pregnant women, their fetuses, and children. However, some thimerosal-free seasonal and H1N1 vaccines will be available for pregnant women and children under three years of age.

***The pandemic H1N1 vaccine will be first available to:***

- Pregnant women
- People living with or caring for infants under 6 months of age
- Emergency medical services personnel and health care workers
- Children and young adults from 6 months through 24 years
- People aged 25 through 64 years with chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease, asthma, diabetes, or weakened immune systems

