

## H1N1 influenza (swine flu) vaccination for infants and children

### Should my children get the H1N1 influenza (swine flu) vaccine?

Yes! Flu vaccine is the best way to protect your children against the flu. It is recommended that children and young adults 6 months through 24 years of age get the H1N1 flu vaccine.

### Why should my children get the H1N1 flu vaccine?

Flu vaccination is very important for children because they are more likely to become very sick and need hospital care if they catch the flu. Children in the United States have died from H1N1 flu. Children under 5 years and children with health problems like asthma and diabetes are at the highest risk.

### Was the H1N1 flu vaccine tested for safety?

Yes. The H1N1 flu vaccine is made the same way as the seasonal flu vaccine. The seasonal flu vaccine and all its ingredients have been shown to be safe for infants and children. The H1N1 flu vaccine has been tested for safety just like the seasonal flu vaccine.

### Does the H1N1 flu vaccine contain the preservative thimerosal?

Preservative keeps vaccine free from bacteria. Research has shown that the preservative thimerosal is safe for infants and children. If you prefer to avoid preservative, thimerosal-free H1N1 flu shots may be available (check with your healthcare provider). The nasal spray flu vaccine does not contain thimerosal and can be given to healthy children age 2 and older.

### Do my children need to get the H1N1 flu vaccine and the seasonal flu vaccine?

Yes. Your children will need to get two separate flu vaccines to protect them from both H1N1 and seasonal flu. They can get both flu vaccines at the same time. It is recommended that children get both the H1N1 and the seasonal flu vaccines as soon as vaccine is available.

### Can my child get the flu from the H1N1 flu vaccine?

No. The flu vaccine cannot cause the flu. Some children have mild side effects from the flu vaccine (see below). Side effects mean your body is responding to the vaccine. It takes about two weeks for the flu vaccine to take effect. It is possible to catch the flu before the vaccine starts to protect you.

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

Most people will not have side effects. If side effects occur, they will likely be mild. Side effects usually begin soon after the shot and last 1 to 2 days. These may include mild fever, aches, or soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given. As with any medicine, there is a very small chance that an allergic reaction may occur. Serious problems from the flu vaccine are very rare. The risk from the vaccine is much smaller than the risk from the flu. If your children have a severe allergy to eggs or to any other vaccine ingredient, they should not get the vaccine.

### Can my newborn baby get the H1N1 flu vaccine?

Babies less than 6 months old cannot get a flu vaccine. Everyone who lives with or cares for a baby less than 6 months old should get both the seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 flu vaccine to protect the newborn baby from the flu. Once your baby is 6 months old, it is recommended that your child get both flu vaccines.

### How many doses of the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine will my children need to get?

Children over the age of 10 will only need one dose of the H1N1 flu vaccine. Children 9 and younger will need 2 doses of the H1N1 flu vaccine. Healthy children over age 2 can get the nasal spray type of flu vaccine.

### What else can I do to protect myself and my family?

- Everyone you live with should get both the seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 flu vaccine.
- Wash hands often with soap and water. Alcohol-based hand cleaners work also.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Keep away from people who are sick. Keep your children home if they are sick.
- Breastfeeding offers protection for your baby. It is safe to breastfeed even when you are sick.

For ongoing updates, go to [www.kingcounty.gov/health/h1n1](http://www.kingcounty.gov/health/h1n1) or call the Flu Hotline 877-903-5464, 24 hours/day (English and Spanish)