

# 2009 H1N1 (Swine) Influenza Vaccination Frequently Asked Questions

*Distributed by the Lebanon County School Districts*

**T**hank you for completing the H1N1 vaccination survey that was sent home at the end of October. The information you provided us is a crucial component in our efforts to plan for the vaccination of our county students. Our schools are continuing to work together with local health officials to keep our students and their families healthy. We are providing you this guide regarding frequently asked questions about the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine. As we receive more information, you will receive updates through your child's school. Again, thank you for your help!

## **Q. How is 2009 H1N1 different from regular (seasonal) flu?**

**A.** Seasonal flu viruses change from year to year, but they are closely related to each other. People who have had flu infections in the past usually have some immunity to seasonal flu viruses (their bodies have built up some ability to fight off the viruses). The 2009 H1N1 flu virus is a new virus strain. It is very different from seasonal flu viruses. Most people have little or no immunity to 2009 H1N1 flu (their bodies are not prepared to fight off the virus).

## **Q. When and where will the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine available?**

**A.** At this time, we do not know when we will have the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine. We also have not determined where the vaccine will be administered. However, the county school districts are working with local health officials to plan where vaccine distribution will take place. When the vaccine becomes available, we will contact our families by letter. Updates may be posted on our websites as well.

## **Q. My child was already sick. Should he receive a 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine?**

**A.** The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), encourages everyone to be vaccinated for H1N1 influenza when vaccines are available, *even if you have already had the flu*. Even if your child had flu-like symptoms this fall, or had H1N1 influenza in the spring, it is still recommended that they receive a vaccination. It is possible to become ill from influenza multiple times. Vaccination is the first line of defence in keeping your child, and others free from illness.

## **Q. My child received a seasonal flu shot. Should they also receive the 2009 H1N1 vaccine?**

**A.** Yes, they should receive the 2009 H1N1 vaccine. However, you should tell the health care professional administering the vaccine two important pieces of information. **1.** *The date your child received the seasonal flu shot*, and **2.** *if your child was vaccinated with an active or inactive vaccine*. This information will help the health care professionals decide which vaccine is right for your child. If you are not sure which vaccine was given to your child, you should contact your doctor or clinic where they received the vaccination.

## **Q. How many does of the 2009 H1N1 Vaccine will my child need?**

**A.** Children through 9 years of age should get two doses of the vaccine, about a month apart. Older children and adults need only one dose.

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## **Q. Which vaccine is right for my child?**

**A.** There are two vaccines that are available to protect against 2009 H1N1 influenza. These vaccines are made just like seasonal flu vaccines, and are expected to be as safe and effective as seasonal flu vaccines. The H1N1 vaccine does not protect against the seasonal flu, or other flu-like viruses. The H1N1 influenza vaccines come in two forms : a nasal spray, and an injection. Some people may not be able to receive a certain type of vaccine. The chart below is a guide on who should receive which vaccine (injection or nasal spray). Remember, ultimately your health care provider will decide what is right for your child.

**x** - Not Recommended  
**✓** - Recommended

	Children 6mos to 2yrs	Children 2yrs to 24yrs
Nasal Spray (LAIV)	<b>x</b>	<b>✓</b>
Injection	<b>✓</b>	<b>✓</b>

## **Q. Is there any reason my child should not be vaccinated?**

**A.** People who have a severe (life-threatening) allergy to eggs, or to any other substance in the vaccine should not get 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine. Tell the person administering the vaccine if your child has any severe allergies. If your child is moderately or severely ill, you might be advised to wait until they recover before getting the vaccine. If your child has a mild cold or other illness, there is usually no need to wait.

## **Q. What if there is a severe reaction?**

**A.** What should I look for? Any unusual condition, such as a high fever or behavior changes. Signs of a severe allergic reaction can include difficulty breathing, hoarseness or wheezing, hives, paleness, weakness, a fast heart beat or dizziness. What should I do? • Call a doctor, or get the person to a doctor right away. • Tell the doctor what happened, the date and time it happened, and when the vaccination was given. • Ask your provider to report the reaction by filing a Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) form. Or you can file this report through the VAERS website at <http://www.vaers.hhs.gov>, or by calling 1-800-822-7967. *VAERS does not provide medical advice.*

## **Q. How can I learn more?**

**A.**

- Ask your health care provider. They can give you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): -Call 1-800-232-4636 (1-800-CDC-INFO) or -Visit CDC's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu> or <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>
- Visit the web at <http://www.flu.gov>