

# H1N1 Vaccine Safety

*Influenza Hotline: 1-800-447-1985*

As the H1N1 influenza vaccine continues to arrive across Iowa, Harrison County Home & Public Health officials remind residents the 2009 H1N1 vaccine is as safe as the seasonal influenza vaccine. “There is a lot of misinformation out there,” said Nicole Carritt. “The H1N1 vaccines are made by the same process, by the same companies, and tested in the same manner as the seasonal vaccine. There is no reason to believe there are any more risks associated with the H1N1 vaccines than the seasonal influenza vaccines.”

Nicole Carritt, Harrison County Home & Public Health Administrator, says in a normal influenza season, the H1N1 vaccine would have been incorporated into the seasonal vaccine; however, because the seasonal vaccine was already in production when the H1N1 influenza was recognized, it was necessary for two vaccines to be created. Next year, the H1N1 strain will likely be included in the seasonal vaccination.

“The risks associated with not getting the H1N1 vaccine are far greater than the sore arm that may result from getting the shot,” said Nicole Carritt. “This virus has the potential to cause serious illness and death. Receiving the vaccination is an effective way to help fight the spread of the virus.”

The seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 vaccine can be given at the same time, or at any time in regards to each, and in any sequence ***with one exception***: if using the live nasal spray vaccine for BOTH the seasonal flu and H1N1, they should be given 4 weeks apart to ensure the best protection from both vaccines.

Since the vaccine is being allocated to states on a staggered basis over the coming weeks, it is important for residents to contact Harrison County Home & Public Health at (712) 644-2220 for information about vaccine availability and vaccine clinic sites. For a map of vaccine clinic sites in Iowa, visit [www.idph.state.ia.us/webmap/default.asp?map=h1n1\\_vaccine\\_sites](http://www.idph.state.ia.us/webmap/default.asp?map=h1n1_vaccine_sites).

As vaccine supply continues to be very limited, Harrison County Home & Public Health will continue to follow the priority groups as determined by the CDC to be at greatest risk from influenza-related complications. Those priority groups include:

- pregnant women,
- people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age,
- health care and emergency medical services personnel who have direct contact with patients,
- persons between the ages of 6 months through 4 years of age, and
- children and adolescents aged 5 through 18 years who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications

Harrison County Home & Public Health is asking that people who fit into one or more of these categories call our office at 712-644-2220 or email our office at [krife@harrisoncountyyia.org](mailto:krife@harrisoncountyyia.org) to leave your name, telephone number, date of birth, and the priority group you fit into so that we can call you when the appropriate type of vaccine is available. Once vaccine is available and we begin to use our call list we will ask some additional screening questions to ensure the vaccine we have is appropriate for you or your child. Walk-ins will be discouraged, as vaccine availability cannot be guaranteed due to the limited supply.

The vaccine is available in two forms both the injectable (shot) and the intranasal (mist) and in very limited supply. We want to encourage all persons eligible to receive the mist to receive the H1N1 vaccine in that form as some populations at very high-risk for influenza-related complications are not eligible to receive the mist (pregnant women, children with chronic medical conditions including asthma, diabetes, and others) and must receive the injectable form. We want to ensure it is available for them. The H1N1 nasal spray is as effective and safe as the seasonal FluMist product.

Those able to receive the H1N1 “mist” are:

- Healthy individuals under 50 years of age who care for a child under 6 months of age
- Healthy healthcare workers giving direct patient care and less than 50 years of age (except those who work with severely immune-compromised patients such as on hospital bone marrow transplant units or caring for those that require specialized environments). Almost all Iowa healthcare workers can receive the live nasal spray H1N1 vaccine
- Healthy children 2 years of age through 4 years of age

As quantities of H1N1 vaccine increase, the priority groups will be expanded to include a larger portion of the population. More information will be forthcoming as the situation and vaccine availability continue to change.

A statewide toll-free hotline has been established for public questions about seasonal and H1N1 influenza at 1-800-447-1985. More information can also be found at [www.idph.state.ia.us](http://www.idph.state.ia.us).

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