



2009 H1N1 Influenza
“Message of the Day”
Wisconsin Division of Public Health

Current as of October 15, 2009



Today's Message

Flu Myths and Realities

MYTH: “The federal government is running a mandatory vaccination campaign.”

- The federal government’s vaccination program for H1N1 flu is VOLUNTARY. Vaccination is highly recommended as a protective measure against the flu, but is absolutely VOLUNTARY.
- The CDC has included health care workers as one of the top priority groups to receive the vaccine, and several places across the country began offering H1N1 vaccination to health care workers this week.
- Some hospitals and localities are requiring that health care workers get vaccinated for the flu, but that is a local decision.

MYTH: “This new vaccine is not safe and is untested.”

- There have been no safety shortcuts.
 - Clinical trials have shown that the new H1N1 vaccine is both safe and effective. The FDA has licensed it.
 - The National Institutes of Health and the vaccine manufacturers have conducted more rigorous tests on the H1N1 vaccine than they do on other flu vaccines, and there have been no red flags from these clinical trials.
- It is produced the same way the seasonal flu vaccine is produced every year. It is simply a new virus strain.
 - Millions of Americans get the seasonal flu vaccine each year without any problems.
 - Had H1N1 struck this country earlier than this spring, the H1N1 strain probably would have been included as part of this year’s seasonal flu shot.

MYTH: “The H1N1 vaccine includes adjuvants, such as squalene.”

- None of the H1N1 vaccines currently distributed by the U.S. government contain adjuvants.
 - An adjuvant is a component that can be incorporated into a vaccine to help to generate a stronger immune response to the vaccine and help prevent disease. Squalene is a compound found in many natural sources, such as olive oil, that can act as an adjuvant and is used as an adjuvant in vaccines in many countries.

- All H1N1 vaccines used in the United States are licensed by the FDA and are made in the same way as seasonal influenza vaccines are made. Currently, seasonal flu vaccines in the United States are also made without adjuvants.

MYTH: “You need to get two doses of the H1N1 vaccine, and it takes a month between each dose.”

- Healthy adults and children 10 and older will need only one dose of vaccine.
- Scientists first thought that two doses might be required, but clinical trial results have since shown the H1N1 vaccine works faster than expected and works well against the H1N1 virus.
- It’s also fine to get the seasonal flu shot and the H1N1 shot at the same time. It is true that if you get the nasal spray form of the vaccine, you need to wait three to four weeks before getting another nasal spray vaccine.

MYTH: “Children can have bad reactions to the H1N1 vaccine.”

- Side effects from the H1N1 flu vaccine are no different from those of the regular seasonal flu vaccine.
 - A small percentage of children will have minor swelling at the injection site, a bit of achiness or a low-grade fever.
- Serious side effects are very rare.
 - In one study of children, the risk of a serious allergic reaction was less than one reaction per 500,000 flu vaccines administered.

MYTH: “I got an email that tells the story of someone who got a flu shot and had a miscarriage two days later.”

- The CDC has received no reports of serious adverse events from people who have received the H1N1 vaccine to date in the clinical trials or in the few places across the country where vaccinations have begun.
- There are 14,000 miscarriages in the U.S. every week.
 - These tragic events are no more common among people who have received seasonal flu vaccine than in people who have not.
- We have stepped-up surveillance methods that will allow us to track adverse reactions and quickly analyze whether there is a link to the vaccine.

MYTH: “It costs too much money to get an H1N1 vaccine.”

- The federal government has purchased the H1N1 vaccine and is providing it to the states free of charge. This is different in many places from the seasonal flu vaccine.
- Public vaccination clinics (sponsored by local health departments at schools or other places) will offer vaccine at no charge. Some private providers may charge a small fee to administer the vaccine, but cost should not be a barrier to getting immunized.

For more information:

<http://www.flu.gov/myths/index.html>

http://host.madison.com/wsj/news/local/health_med_fit/article_85f39dfc-b907-11de-b3fd-001cc4c03286.html