

## New York State Department of Health

### Vaccine Information for People 65 and Older (Revised December 2009)

If you are 65 years of age or older and have been waiting for H1N1 flu vaccine to be available to you, the wait is over. As of December 10, 2009, **H1N1 vaccine is now available to everyone and anyone over the age of six months can and should get the vaccine.**

People over 65 years of age should only get the injectable vaccine – the shot. The nasal spray vaccine is only licensed for people 2 years to 49 years of age who do not have an underlying medical condition and who are not pregnant.

Even though people over 65 are less likely to get H1N1 flu, those who do get infected can become seriously ill. Now that the vaccine is available to everyone over 6 months of age, don't take a chance. Don't get sick, get a flu shot!

It is particularly important for people most vulnerable to H1N1 flu to get vaccinated. This includes pregnant women, people who live with or care for children under 6 months of age, health care workers, emergency medical responders, persons ages 6 months-24 years, and people 25-64 years old who have chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems. Because seasonal flu may be around at the same time as H1N1 flu, you should also get the seasonal flu vaccine if it is available to you. After getting vaccinated, you will be less likely to spread the flu.

### Why get vaccinated now; isn't flu activity declining?

Typically, the most flu activity in New York State occurs from January through March and the flu season runs until May. Getting vaccinated now with both seasonal flu vaccine and H1N1 flu vaccine will provide protection for you against flu for the rest of the season this winter and spring.

### Do this, too

Take these everyday steps to prevent the spread of germs and reduce your risk of getting or spreading the flu:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or sneeze into your sleeve – not your hands. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based gel hand cleaners are also good to use if you are not near a sink.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people. Stay at least six feet away from someone who is coughing or sneezing.

### Watch for flu symptoms

Flu symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headaches, chills, and fatigue. With H1N1 flu sometimes there is diarrhea and vomiting. If you get flu-like symptoms, stay home, limit contact with others, and call your doctor right away. Your doctor will decide if treatment is needed.

More information about the flu is available at [www.nyhealth.gov](http://www.nyhealth.gov) and [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov).



Distributed by the Rockland County Department of Health

[www.rocklandgov.com](http://www.rocklandgov.com)

(845) 364-2633

C. Scott Vanderhoef, County Executive/Joan H. Facelle, MD, MPH, Commissioner of Health