

Novel H1N1 Influenza (Swine Flu): Questions and Answers for Pregnant Women

Onondaga County Health Department

What is Novel H1N1 (swine) flu?

- H1N1 is a novel (new) influenza A virus that is transmitted by person-to-person contact.
- H1N1 causes similar illness as seasonal flu.
- H1N1 can have a devastating impact on pregnant women.

Should pregnant women get the H1N1 vaccine?

Yes. Pregnant women are in the priority group to obtain the H1N1 vaccine. Talk to your doctor about getting this new vaccine as soon as it is available. In the meantime, be sure to get vaccinated against seasonal flu. Seasonal flu can cause serious problems in pregnant women and place them and their pregnancy at risk of serious complications.

Is the 2009 H1N1 vaccine safe for pregnant women?

Flu vaccines generally have not been shown to cause harm to a pregnant woman or her baby. The seasonal flu shot is proven safe and is recommended for pregnant women. The 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine has been made using the same process that is used to make the seasonal flu vaccine.

Are there additional ways to protect mom, baby, and family?

Yes. Follow these good health habits to help prevent the flu:

- If you get sick with flu-like symptoms, stay home, limit your contact with others, and call your doctor right away. Your doctor will decide if testing or treatment is needed.
- Avoid close contact with anyone who is sick with the flu.
- Wash your hands often with warm soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. You can also use alcohol-based hand cleaners.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- If you have close contact with someone who has novel H1N1 flu or flu-like symptoms, or is being treated for exposure to novel H1N1 flu, contact your doctor to discuss whether you need antiviral drugs to reduce your chances of getting the flu.

