



Priority Groups for Novel H1N1 Vaccine

FACT SHEET

The priority population groups for the novel H1N1 vaccine are: pregnant women; persons who live with or provide care for infants less than 6 months old like parents, grandparents, guardians, siblings and daycare providers; persons aged 6 months – 24 years; persons aged 25-64 years with chronic medical conditions; and health care workers and emergency medical services personnel.

While the novel H1N1 vaccine will be available first to those in the priority groups, it is expected that there will be enough vaccine over time to provide the vaccine to anyone who wants it.

Why have the priority groups been selected to receive the novel H1N1 vaccine?

In general, aside from health care and emergency medical personnel, the priority population groups were selected because they are at greater risk of becoming seriously ill when sick with novel H1N1 flu.

Pregnant Women	Pregnant women are more likely to go to the hospital or possibly die when sick with flu, including novel H1N1.
Persons living with or providing care for infants less than 6 months old	Infants less than 6 months old cannot get a flu vaccine. By giving the vaccine to those persons around the infant, a protective ring is created that lowers the chances that the infant will get sick with flu.
Persons 6-months – 24 years	Most people who become sick with novel H1N1 are younger than 25 years of age. In Spring 2009, the highest rates of novel H1N1 were in those aged 5-24 years.
Persons 25 – 64 years with chronic medical conditions	These individuals are more likely to go to the hospital when sick with flu.
Health care workers and emergency medical personnel	Health care workers and emergency medical personnel provide direct patient care. If these individuals become sick, they may: (1) not be able to care for persons with severe illness or give vaccinations; and (2) spread the novel H1N1 virus to patients and other health care staff, which can lead to outbreaks in healthcare settings.

Why are older adults not a target group for the novel H1N1 vaccine?

Older adults are not among the current target groups for the novel H1N1 vaccine while they are for the seasonal flu shot. This is because they are not likely to become ill from novel H1N1 flu as other groups. Since April 2009, there have been fewer than expected cases, hospitalizations and deaths in persons aged 65 and over due to novel H1N1. One reason may be that persons 65 years and over may have had exposure to a previous flu virus that provides some protection against the current strain of H1N1.