

November 3, 2009

H1N1 vaccine clinics: high risk groups

Beginning November 5, clinics will provide the H1N1 vaccine to Albertans at high risk. At this time, the vaccine will **not** be available to other Albertans.

Children six to 60 months – beginning November 5

Children aged six months to under five years as of November 1 are eligible to receive the H1N1 vaccine starting on November 5. Proof of age (Health Care card, birth certificate or other valid identification) must be provided.

Pregnant women – beginning November 6

Clinics will be expanded to also provide the H1N1 vaccine to pregnant women.

Other High risk groups

Only when the vaccine supply is available, clinics will also provide the H1N1 vaccine to adults under 65 with chronic health conditions. Details on these clinics will be announced once plans have been finalized.

Clinics for general public

Clinics to provide the H1N1 vaccine to the general public will resume once the vaccine supply is available. Every Albertan who wants to be immunized will have the ability to receive the H1N1 vaccine over the next two months.

Clinic locations

For the most current information on clinic dates, times and locations, and the groups being vaccinated, go to: www.albertahealthservices.ca.

Health Link Alberta

Anyone who is sick or caring for somebody who is sick and needs immediate advice, should call Health Link Alberta:

- In Calgary, 403-943-5465
- In Edmonton, 780-408-5465
- Toll free 1-866-408-5465 in Alberta.

For more information visit: www.healthlinkalberta.ca; www.health.alberta.ca; www.fightflu.ca.

What is the minimum age that can have the vaccine?

The H1N1 flu vaccine is not licensed for children under six months of age.

Who should get this vaccine?

You shouldn't get the H1N1 flu vaccine if: you have had a previous anaphylactic (severe allergic reaction) to any element of the vaccine or:

- If you currently have a high fever, you should defer receiving the vaccine until you have recovered
- You have a hypersensitivity to eggs (e.g. hives, swelling of mouth and/or throat, breathing difficulty)
- You have experienced Guillian-Barré Syndrome (GBS) within eight weeks of receiving a seasonal flu vaccine
- If you have a mild egg allergy, consult a health care provider before immunization. You may be able to be immunized with some additional precautions.

Will children need one or two vaccines?

The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends that children from six months up to and including nine years old receive two half-doses of the H1N1 adjuvanted vaccine. Children 10 years and older should receive one full dose of the H1N1 adjuvanted vaccine. National recommendations on the use of H1N1 flu vaccine have been developed based on the latest scientific evidence, including clinical trial results.

Why is an unadjuvanted H1N1 vaccine being recommended for pregnant women?

It is strongly recommended that pregnant women be immunized with the H1N1 vaccine. The unadjuvanted H1N1 vaccine is the preferred option for pregnant women given that there is more safety data on the use of unadjuvanted seasonal vaccines in pregnant women.

What if a pregnant woman received the adjuvanted vaccine because it was available first, is it going to be harmful?

The World Health Organization has strongly recommended that pregnant women be immunized against the H1N1 2009 influenza virus, even if an unadjuvanted vaccine is not available. There is more safety data on the use of unadjuvanted seasonal vaccines in pregnant women. The recommendation to use the unadjuvanted vaccine is precautionary.