

Thomas Jefferson Health District

Q & A for School Administrators & Nurses

School-based H1N1 Flu Vaccine Clinics - Updated 10/6/09

Basic Information about the H1N1 Flu Vaccine

Q: Who is recommended to get the H1N1 flu vaccine?

A: The CDC recommends that everyone six months old and greater (without a contraindication to the vaccine) get the H1N1 flu vaccine. This helps to protect children, staff and their families from getting sick and helps protect those who are at greater risk of developing complications, including:

- Pregnant women
- Children younger than 5 years
- Children with neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism, seizure disorders and cerebral palsy
- Persons with underlying health conditions such as asthma, heart disease and diabetes or those with compromised immune systems.

Q: Does the H1N1 flu vaccine only come as a shot?

A: No. There are two forms of the vaccine: a shot and a nasal spray.

Q: Where can I find specific information about the H1N1 flu vaccine?

A: Please review the 2009 H1N1 Influenza Vaccine Information Statement (VIS).

Q: How many doses of H1N1 flu vaccine are needed?

A:

- Anyone 10 years and older needs only one dose of the H1N1 flu vaccine.
- Children 9 years old and younger will need two doses given 4 weeks apart.

Q: How safe is the H1N1 flu vaccine?

A:

- The vaccine is produced just like the seasonal flu vaccine.
- CDC expects the types/frequencies of side effects from the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine to be similar to those with seasonal flu vaccines, i.e., mainly mild, localized reactions.

Q: Is there anyone who should not receive the H1N1 flu vaccine?

A: Yes. Please refer to the 2009 H1N1 Influenza Vaccine Information Statement (VIS).

Q: Does the H1N1 flu vaccine contain a preservative?

A:

- Yes, some of the vaccine does contain a preservative.
- Parents who prefer that their child receive a preservative-free vaccine should contact their health care provider.

Q: Should you receive the H1N1 flu vaccine if you had a flu-like illness since April?

A: The CDC recommends that unless you had a PCR or culture test that confirmed that the flu-like illness was caused by the H1N1 influenza virus, you should still get the H1N1 flu vaccine. PCR and culture tests have to be sent to a lab and it takes at least 2-3 days to get the results.

Q: Will the H1N1 flu vaccine protect against other seasonal flu strains?

A: No. The CDC recommends both the seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 flu vaccine for full protection this flu season.

Q: Will anyone in the schools be mandated to get the vaccine?

A: No. Vaccination is strictly voluntary.

H1N1 Flu Vaccine at School-based Clinics in TJHD

Q: Who can receive the H1N1 flu vaccine at schools?

- A:
- H1N1 flu vaccine at school-based clinics will be available for students and staff.
 - It will not be available for family members of students or staff in these settings.
 - Family members should be referred to private providers or other health department clinics.

Q: How much will the H1N1 flu vaccine cost?

- A:
- H1N1 flu vaccine is free through school-based clinics and at the health department.
 - Those who arrange to be vaccinated through a private provider may be charged an administrative fee that many insurance companies will cover.

Q: Will both the H1N1 flu shot and the nasal spray be available at school-based clinics?

- A:
- **Only the H1N1 flu shot will be given to students during the school-based clinics.**
 - Parents who prefer nasal spray for their child should be referred to their health care provider.
 - **Staff will have a choice of the H1N1 flu shot and the nasal spray, as supplies allow.**

Q: Can parents accompany their children during the school-based clinics?

- A: School districts can make this decision; however, for clinics to operate smoothly, the health department recommends that parents not accompany children during the vaccination clinics.

Q: How will children 9 years old and younger get their second dose of vaccine?

- A:
- The health department will schedule another clinic for children 9 years old and younger to receive their second dose.
 - Children with signed consent who receive the first vaccine at school will also receive the second dose at school, unless the parent notifies the school nurse in writing that they decline the second dose for their child.

Q: Can children who did not receive the vaccine at the first clinic receive it at the follow-up clinics scheduled for second doses?

- A: To avoid any possible confusion, any child who misses the first appointment will **not** be able to receive a vaccine during the follow-up clinics scheduled to give the second doses. Parents should be referred to the health department or their private provider.

Q: How will children be screened for any contraindications to the vaccine?

- A:
- The "Student 2009 H1N1 Influenza Vaccination Consent Form" was written by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) to provide screening criteria for both the H1N1 flu shot and nasal spray vaccines. Per VDH requirements, all children will be screened using this form.
 - The consent form must be signed by parents for the child to receive the vaccine.
 - Nurses will review the forms, identify children who can not receive the H1N1 flu shot, and notify parents that their child has a contraindication and can not get the H1N1 flu shot.

Q: The Student 2009 H1N1 Influenza Vaccination Consent Form contains screening criteria for both the H1N1 flu shot and the H1N1 nasal spray vaccine. Which criteria do we use to determine who receives the vaccine at school?

- A:
- Screen only for contraindications to the H1N1 flu shot, notifying parents only if students don't meet its criteria.
 - Please ignore screening questions for the H1N1 flu nasal spray vaccine, since students are not being offered this vaccine option.

Q: What should students and staff be advised to wear for school-based clinics?

- A: We recommend wearing loose-sleeved apparel on the day of the vaccination.

Q: Will there be incentives for children who receive the vaccine?

- A: The health department hopes to provide stickers for children in younger grades as incentives.

Where To Refer People Who Need More Information

Q: Where should I refer a non-English speaking parent with questions?

- A:
- All VIS and consent forms will be translated into Spanish; it is anticipated that VIS forms will be translated into other languages.
 - If a Limited English Proficient (LEP) parent has questions about H1N1 flu vaccine, please ask him/her to call Melissa Walker at the health department: (434) 972-6299, who will connect the caller with a phone interpretation service to answer questions about the vaccination clinic.

Q: Where can I get more information?

- A:
- For the most current information on the H1N1 flu, go to the CDC website: www.flu.gov.
 - You can submit questions on-line at the Virginia Department of Health website: www.vdh.virginia.gov or call the VDH toll-free H1N1 hotline, Mondays through Fridays, 8:30 to 4:30 at 1-877-ASK-VDH3 (1-877-275-8343).