

## **H1N1 Frequently Asked Questions**

### **When can I get in for an appointment at Lane County Public Health?**

Lane County Public Health (LCPH) is currently booked for appointments. There are several walk-in clinics for H1N1 scheduled in the next month. These will be dependent on the availability of the vaccine. It is unknown how much vaccine will be available or if there will be both the mist (live, weakened virus and the injection killed virus) available. The free walk-in clinics will be held:

- 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, October 31, Regional Sports Center, 200 S. 32nd Street, Springfield
- 4-7 p.m., Monday, November 2, Shepherd Room, 700 Gibbs Ave., Cottage Grove
- 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, November 7, Wheeler Pavilion, Lane County Fairgrounds, 796 W. 13th Street, Eugene
- 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, November 14, Wheeler Pavilion, Lane County Fairgrounds, 796 S. 13th Street, Eugene

### **Am I high risk? Yes, if you are:**

- Between the ages of 6 months and 24 years old.
- Pregnant
- A healthcare provider working in a clinical setting. This includes nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, residential care facilities, and continuing care retirement communities.
- A caregiver for infants 6 months or younger on a regular basis. This includes those who live with the infant or will care routinely for the infant. (This does not include someone who will have their grandchild visiting for a weekend, or someone who has a neighbor who is pregnant.)
- Age 25 to 64: If you have a chronic medical condition such as asthma, heart disease, neurological conditions, diabetes, or suppressed immune system.
- A front line law enforcement or public safety worker.
- Persons over the age of 65 are not recommended to get the vaccine at this time, unless they qualify as a healthcare worker or caregiver for infants. This age group may have been exposed to a similar virus before 1957 and may have some protective immunity. This age group does not get as sick from this H1N1 virus.

### **What are the complications/side effects/ risks for the H1N1 flu shot?**

The benefits outweigh the risks. The risks are minimal compared to the risks of the flu itself. Refer to [www.flu.oregon.gov](http://www.flu.oregon.gov) and [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for more information. Another good, well-researched article is at: <http://www.newsweek.com/id/218513>

### **What is the difference between the H1N1 nasal vaccination and the shot?**

The shot is a vaccine made from a killed virus and the nasal vaccine is made from a weakened live virus. The nasal vaccination has stricter qualifications to receive it such as people who:

- Are between the ages of 2 and 49
- Not pregnant
- Healthy with no episodes of asthma or wheezing in the past year
- Do not have any neurological conditions

**Can I choose to have the shot when I qualify for the nasal mist?**

No, Lane County Public Health needs to reserve the inactivated virus shots for high-risk people who do not have this choice. If you meet the qualifications for live weakened virus vaccine that is the form we will offer you. The nasal vaccine has proven safe and may offer greater protection for people who are healthy and meet the criteria for it.

**Can I get the H1N1 and Seasonal flu vaccines at the same time?**

Yes, but the live virus vaccines must be 28 days apart between receiving any live viruses.

**Do I need to have two doses of H1N1 vaccine?**

Ages 9 and younger need two doses at least 28 days apart for both the nasal mist and shot. Those ages 10 and older only need one dose.

**I'm over the age of 65; can I get the H1N1 vaccine?**

At this time, no one over the age of 65 can get the shot even if they have compromised health. They are not considered high risk and quite a few people in this age group seem to have some immunity.

**Where else can I get the vaccine?**

Look at our list on the Lane County website at [www.lanecounty.org](http://www.lanecounty.org) You may call these providers and see what their supply is like at this time.

**What are the symptoms of H1N1?**

H1N1 is a respiratory illness similar to the seasonal flu. Symptoms may include: fever (greater than 100°F or 37.8°C), sore throat, cough, stuffy nose, chills, headache and body aches, and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting with this flu.

**If I get sick, what should I do?**

Please stay home unless you have the warning signs described below. The vast majorities of people diagnosed with flu have had mild illness and will do fine with Tylenol or Ibuprofen, coupled with plenty of fluids and rest.

Don't go to the emergency room unless you are very sick (see "Warning Signs" below). Emergency Rooms (ERs) should be used for very sick patients only. Before going to the ER, check with your physician. Some serious illness such as meningitis may have symptoms similar to the flu, so be sure to describe your symptoms in detail.

By saving the ER for the most severe cases we not only make sure it is available for true emergencies, but we protect patients already in the hospital from unnecessary exposure to the flu bug.

**Should I get the H1N1 test if I am sick?**

Testing won't really do you any good. If you have the flu this fall, you have H1N1 – there are no other influenzas in Oregon at this time. Testing is unnecessary. Testing will not change the treatment. The test for H1N1 is uncomfortable, expensive, and often not conclusive since it is dependent on multiple factors for accuracy.

**Do I need anti-viral medicine?**

Anti-viral medicine, such as Tamiflu, is used only for people who are extremely sick, or for patients who are high-risk including: Infants and babies, pregnant women, or patients with other serious medical conditions.

**Warning signs: *How do I know if I am really sick?***

The Centers for Disease Control advises us to get medical care right away if anyone at home:

- Has difficulty breathing or chest pain.
- Has purple or blue discoloration of the lips.
- Is vomiting and unable to keep liquids down.
- Has signs of dehydration such as dizziness when standing, absence of urination or, in infants, and a lack of tears when crying.
- Have seizures (for example, uncontrolled convulsions).
- Is less responsive than normal or becomes confused.