

H1N1 INFLUENZA VACCINE AND PEOPLE 65 YEARS AND OLDER

Many people age 65 and older are concerned about the new H1N1 influenza virus and the fact that they will not receive a vaccination at community H1N1 clinics at this time. There are two main reasons for this according to the United States Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

1. People age 65 and older are least likely to get sick with this virus; and
2. There will be limited amounts of vaccine available at first, so the first doses are recommended to go to those who are most likely to get infected and become very ill.

Because there has been so little H1N1 illness in people 65 and older, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended that CDC and immunization programs focus on getting the first doses of H1N1 vaccine to those people who are more likely to get H1N1 flu. This includes:

- Pregnant women;
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age;
- Healthcare workers and emergency medical services personnel;
- Children and young people between the ages of 6 months through 24 years of age; and
- Adults 24-64 years with underlying risk conditions or medical conditions that increase their risk of complications from influenza.

In the meantime, to protect yourself from influenza and other diseases, it is very important that you:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or elbow, or cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue. Throw out the tissue and wash your hands afterward.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Stay away from sick people.
- Stay home if you are sick.