

## H1N1 Flu Advisory

On June 11, 2009, the World Health Organization declared the H1N1 virus global outbreak to be a pandemic. Since that time, the pandemic has been deemed to be mild to moderate, and, while many lives have been lost, the numbers have been much lower than feared. Nevertheless, public health officials stress the importance of vigilance and preparation for another wave---the third---of this pandemic. So far during this usual flu season, the incidence of new cases has been relatively low. For those people at high risk for more readily contracting or suffering complications from the H1N1 influenza, the advice is straightforward: get immunized. There is plenty of vaccine available now.

The World Health Organization (WHO), CDC and other international, national and state medical authorities stopped counting and reporting cases of Novel H1N1 influenza A and have been keeping statistics only on hospitalizations and deaths. Even many of them have not been precisely identified as due to H1N1, but, since H1N1 statistically is causing 90+% of influenza cases, most hospitalizations and deaths due to influenza like illness (ILI), if not laboratory-confirmed, are attributed to the pandemic virus. The CDC continues to provide estimates of numbers of U.S. cases, hospitalizations and deaths, and states that people under age 65 have been hit the hardest, as have women, particularly those who are in their second and third months of pregnancy. CDC estimates that as of December 12, 2009 there have been approximately 55 million U.S. cases (50 million of those in adults under 65 and children). More than 246,000 hospitalizations have been reported. And there have been more than 11,000 deaths – 1,200 among children under 17. More recent figures will be posted here as CDC releases them. Influenza of any type is at relatively low levels throughout the country, even though this is traditionally a period of high incidence. Among the Washington State population as of 1/23/10, there have been 1383 hospitalizations and seventy-six (76) deaths in all age groups. This information has been and will continue to be updated here regularly; for more information please refer to the [CDC](#) or [WHO](#) websites.

**Again, AMH urges all Hanford employees to take advantage of the increased availability of H1N1 vaccine in the community and get vaccinated.** All people are eligible to receive it, according to CDC and other health officials. There is some evidence that the seasonal vaccine may provide some immunity to the H1N1 virus; this means that workers who received their flu shots during AMH's on-Site flu clinics may have some protection from the pandemic virus. Nevertheless, AMH recommends workers receive the H1N1 vaccine, now readily accessible in the Benton-Franklin area. Data from around the world demonstrates that the vaccine is safe and effective.

AMH continues to closely monitor updates and recommendations from local and state health authorities as well as those from CDC and WHO. At the bottom of this advisory are links to the most useful health websites to keep you updated on the outbreak and to give you the advice you need to stay healthy. As this is a dynamic situation, AMH recommends that you stay informed by checking the links provided and/or listening to broadcast updates on public media (radio, TV, Internet).

Health Information Links with updated H1N1 Flu information:

- [U.S. Government's Pandemic site](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control](#)
- [Benton-Franklin Health Department](#)
- [WA DOH Pandemic Flu Family Brochure](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)
- [AMH Pandemic Influenza](#)
- [Department of Energy](#)
- [EPA-approved surface disinfectants](#)
- [Return to Work after Influenza](#)

# HANFORD SITE H1N1 InFLUenza FAQs

## February 2010 Update

**1. Will AMH be giving H1N1---“Swine Flu”---shots?**

AMH does NOT plan to administer H1N1 vaccinations.

**2. Any idea how bad the H1N1 flu will be?**

No one can be sure if this mild-to-moderate pandemic will worsen in the future. So far, since the holidays, the rates of infection have slowed down. Nevertheless, all viruses can mutate; it is possible this virus could change in a way to cause more serious illness. Stay informed by checking the AMH website.

**3. When and where can I get H1N1 vaccination?**

The vaccine is widely available through local providers throughout Tri-Cities.

**4. Who is eligible for H1N1 vaccine?**

Everyone. Those in high risk groups are urged to receive it: children, 2-4 years of age, and those 5-18 with underlying illnesses such as asthma or diabetes; caretakers of infants under 6 months of age; pregnant women; the markedly obese; people with underlying diseases and/or who are undergoing treatment that weakens the immune system.

**5. How many shots will I need?**

Children under 10: two doses, nasal mist or injection; over 10: one dose of injectable vaccine. Some variation on type and number of doses is likely, depending on federal (CDC; HHS) guidance, vaccine availability, provider preference and other factors.

**6. How much will it cost me?**

There is no cost for the vaccine itself. Providers may charge an “administrative fee” of approximately \$15 -25.

**7. Is there any risk in taking the H1N1 shot?**

Medical authorities state that this vaccine has the same safety and efficacy as seasonal influenza vaccines, now borne out by millions of doses given worldwide and no reports of serious side-effects.

**8. What about Tamiflu?**

If you have an underlying condition that might make you more at risk for a serious complication from H1N1 flu, you should ask your healthcare professional if (s)he will be willing to call in a prescription for Tamiflu if you develop symptoms of an “influenza-like illness” (ILI) to him/her on the phone. Since Tamiflu works best during the first two days of illness, avoiding a trip to the medical office will reduce a delay in treatment (and prevent spread of the flu).

**9. Would a mask protect me from the flu?**

Use of a face mask to prevent catching the flu is controversial. Preventing the flu is best done by frequent hand washing (or alcohol-based sanitizing) and avoiding contact with ill or possibly ill people. If YOU are ill, cover your cough and DO NOT go to work sick; recovering individuals should be isolated from others until at least 24 hours after non-medicated fever has gone away, illness has lasted at least 5 days and cough is improving. If you are sick and must be around others, wearing a simple mask can help keep you from spreading your illness.

**AMH Flu Clinic Hotline: (509) 376-1000**