

What Pregnant Women Should Know About Novel H1N1 Flu

Pregnant women who get sick with 2009 H1N1 can have serious health problems. They can get sicker than other people who get Novel H1N1 flu. Some pregnant women sick with 2009 H1N1 have had early labor and severe pneumonia. Some have died. If you are pregnant and have symptoms of the flu, take it very seriously.

What can I do to protect myself, my baby and my family?

Getting a flu shot is the single best way to protect against the flu. Talk with your doctor about getting a seasonal flu shot **and** the Novel H1N1 flu shot. You will need both flu shots this year to be fully protected against flu. You should get both shots as soon as they are available to protect you and your baby.

Babies younger than 6 months cannot be given flu vaccine, so it is important that you and every person around the baby get their flu shots. This will not only protect those who got the vaccine from getting sick, but also protect the baby.

Take these everyday steps to help prevent the spread of germs and protect your health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or sneeze into your sleeve. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based gel hand cleaners are also good to use.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people. (If you are pregnant and live or have close contact with someone who has the flu, talk to your doctor about medicines to prevent flu.)



What are the symptoms of Novel H1N1 Flu?

Symptoms are like seasonal flu and include the following:

Fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headaches, chills and fatigue, and sometimes diarrhea and vomiting.

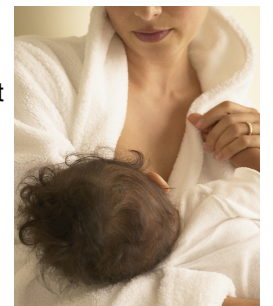


What should I do if I get sick?

- Call your doctor right away if you have flu symptoms or if you have close contact with someone who has the flu. Your doctor will decide if testing or treatment is needed. Like regular flu, Novel H1N1 flu may make other medical problems worse.
- Pay extra attention to your body and how you are feeling.
- If you get sick with flu-like symptoms, stay home and limit contact with others.
- If you are alone at any time, it is always a good idea to have someone check in with you often if you are feeling ill.
- Do not stop breastfeeding if you are ill. Breastfeed early and often. Your immunities will pass to your baby through your breastmilk and will help protect

your baby from infection.

- Be careful not to cough or sneeze in the baby's face, wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Change your clothes often, especially before breastfeeding.
- Your doctor might ask you to wear a mask to keep from spreading this new virus to your baby.
- If you are too sick to breastfeed, pump and have someone give the expressed milk to your baby.



How is Novel H1N1 flu treated?

- Treat any fever right away with acetaminophen (Tylenol®).
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Your doctor will decide if you need antiviral drugs such as Tamiflu® (oseltamivir) or Relenza® (zanamivir). These medicines work best when started within 2 days after symptoms begin, but they may be given to very sick or high risk people (like pregnant women) even after 48 hours.
- There is little information about the effect of antiviral drugs in pregnant women or their babies, but no serious side effects have been reported. If you do think you have had a side effect to antiviral drugs, call your doctor right away.
- Mothers who are breastfeeding can continue to nurse their babies while being treated for the flu.

Novel H1N1 Flu Vaccine and Pregnant Women

Why should pregnant women get the Novel H1N1 flu vaccine?



It is important for a pregnant woman to receive the Novel H1N1 flu vaccine as well as a seasonal influenza vaccine.

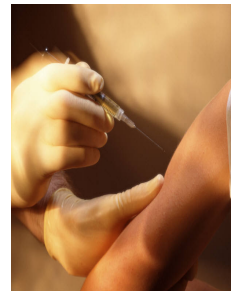
A pregnant woman who gets any type of flu is at risk for serious illness. While hand washing, staying away from ill people, and other steps can help to protect pregnant women from influenza, vaccination is the single best way to protect against the flu.

In addition to protecting pregnant women from infection, infants less than 6 months old will not be able to be vaccinated so it is recommended that everyone who lives with or provides care for infants less than 6 months of age receive both the seasonal influenza vaccine and Novel H1N1 flu vaccine to provide protection for the infant.

Is there a special kind of flu vaccine that pregnant women should get? Are there flu vaccines that pregnant women should not get?

There are two types of flu vaccine. **Pregnant women should get the "flu shot"**, given with a needle, usually in the arm. The flu shot is approved for use in pregnant women.

The other type of flu vaccine — nasal-spray flu vaccine (sometimes called FluMist)—is not approved for pregnant women. This vaccine is only approved for healthy people 2-49 years of age who are not pregnant.



How many doses of the Novel H1N1 flu vaccine will pregnant women need to get?

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the use of **one dose of Novel H1N1 flu vaccine** for persons 10 years of age and older.

Is the Novel H1N1 flu vaccine safe for pregnant women?



Influenza vaccines have not been shown to cause harm to a pregnant woman or her baby. The seasonal flu shot (injection) is proven as safe and already recommended for pregnant women. The Novel H1N1 flu vaccine is being made using the same processes and facilities that are used to make seasonal influenza vaccines.

Some women are concerned about exposure to preservatives during pregnancy. Manufacturers will produce Novel H1N1 flu vaccines that do not have the preservative thimerosal for use with pregnant women and small children.

The side effects from Novel H1N1 flu vaccine are expected to be similar to those from seasonal flu vaccines. Anyone who has a severe (life-threatening) allergy to eggs or to any other substance in the vaccine should not get the vaccine.

Will the seasonal flu vaccine also protect against the Novel H1N1 flu?

The seasonal flu vaccine will not protect against the Novel H1N1 flu, and the Novel H1N1 flu vaccine will not protect against seasonal influenza.

If I already got sick with a flu-like illness in the past year, do I still need to get the Novel H1N1 flu vaccine? Do I need a test to know if I need the vaccine or not?

There is no test that can show whether a person had Novel H1N1 flu in the past. **Even if you got sick with an influenza-like illness previously, you should get the vaccine.** If you were tested for H1N1 in the past, you should talk to your healthcare provider. There is no harm in being vaccinated if you had Novel H1N1 flu in the past.



Public Health Hotlines:
California Department of Public Health:
1-888-865-0564
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC):
1-800-232-4636

For more information:
Yolo County Health Department
Call: (530) 666-8645
Visit: www.yolohealth.org

