

H1N1 Flu Vaccine:

who should be vaccinated and why.

The **H1N1 influenza virus** is a new virus that appeared in April and May 2009. Since that time, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) identified the groups of people most likely to be infected, hospitalized, or become seriously ill from H1N1 flu. These are called priority groups. They are:

Pregnant women because they are four times more likely to be hospitalized than other people who catch the flu. Vaccinating pregnant women can also help protect infants who cannot be vaccinated.

People who live with or care for children younger than six months old because younger infants are at higher risk of influenza-related complications and cannot be vaccinated.

Health care and emergency medical services personnel because they need to be healthy to care for others.

Children from 6 months through 18 years old because they are often in close contact with others in day care or school, which increases the chance that H1N1 could spread.

Young adults from 19 through 24 years old because H1N1 is more common in healthy young adults than regular seasonal flu and they are at risk for complications

Adults from 25 through 64 years old who have chronic conditions that make them more likely to develop complications from it (such as: asthma, diabetes, heart, lung, liver, kidney disease, cancer, immune deficiencies, etc.).

Why aren't the elderly on this list?

The H1N1 virus doesn't appear to infect people over 60 years old as often as younger people. There are fewer complications among people 65 and older than among younger people. In contrast to the **H1N1** flu, the **seasonal** flu infects the elderly more frequently – 60% of people who are hospitalized by **seasonal** flu are 65 years or older. For this reason, Kaiser Permanente physicians and the CDC recommend that the elderly be vaccinated against **seasonal** flu.

Is there enough H1N1 vaccine for everyone?

Flu manufacturers have worked around the clock since April to produce the H1N1 vaccine. It takes many months to produce vaccine, and initial supplies will be limited. As time goes by, more vaccine will be produced so we can vaccinate more people at risk for complications from H1N1 flu.

Who should be vaccinated first?

The initial supply of H1N1 vaccine will be limited. Kaiser Permanente will follow CDC and California Department of Public Health (CDPH) guidelines to vaccinate as many people as possible in the priority list above. If initial supplies are not sufficient to cover everyone on that list, Kaiser Permanente will follow CDC and CDPH guidelines to vaccinate sub-groups on the list – the people who are most likely to get sick or be hospitalized.

Should I be concerned if I can't be vaccinated right now?

The CDC has conducted extensive research to understand which people are at the highest risk of catching H1N1 flu or being hospitalized. Their guidelines are designed to protect people most vulnerable to the H1N1 flu. If you are not on the list for vaccination, there's a reason – it's because you are less likely to get sick or be hospitalized from H1N1 flu. More priority groups will receive vaccinations as more vaccine becomes available.

For information about flu vaccine availability at your Kaiser Permanente facility, call **1-800-KP-FLU-11 (1-800-573-5811)**.

For additional information, please see these Web sites:

kp.org/flu or <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination>