



2009 H1N1 Influenza Vaccine and Seniors

Why aren't people 65 and older recommended to get early doses of 2009 H1N1 vaccine?

- People age 65 and older are least likely to get sick with this virus.
- There has been very little 2009 H1N1 illness in people 65 and older since the virus emerged.
- There will be limited amounts of vaccine available first, so the first doses are recommended to go to those who are most likely to get infected and become very ill.
- H1N1 flu is more severe in certain groups — children under 2, pregnant women, people with health problems like asthma, diabetes and heart disease. Teens and young adults are also more vulnerable to H1N1 flu.

Will people age 65 years and older be able to get the 2009 H1N1 vaccine this season?

- Yes, the U.S. government has purchased 250 million doses of 2009 H1N1 vaccine, so anyone who wants to get the vaccine will have the opportunity to do so.
- People age 65 years and older can get the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine as soon as the high risk groups have had the opportunity to be vaccinated.
- Some communities and providers will offer the 2009 H1N1 vaccine to people 65 and over sooner than others, depending on how quickly they meet the needs of the initial prioritized populations.
- While the early doses of 2009 H1N1 vaccine are being given to those in high risk groups, CDC's priority for people 65 and older is to have them get their seasonal flu vaccine first, and to seek medical advice quickly if they develop flu-like symptoms this season.

Should people age 65 and older get the regular flu vaccine this year?

- Yes. CDC's priority for people 65 and older is to have them get their regular, or “seasonal,” flu vaccine as soon as possible while we are waiting for more doses of the 2009 H1N1 vaccine.
- Seasonal flu viruses are expected to circulate along with 2009 H1N1 viruses this season.
- People age 65 and older are at increased risk for complications from seasonal influenza compared to younger people and are recommended for annual seasonal flu vaccines. This year is no exception.

What should people age 65 and older do if they feel like they have the flu?

- People age 65 and older should seek medical advice quickly if they develop flu symptoms this season to see whether they might need medical evaluation and possible treatment with antiviral medications.
- People 65 and older are prioritized to get antiviral drugs if they become sick with the flu.

Why are people 65 and older prioritized for antiviral treatment if they get sick with the flu, but they are not in one of the early groups prioritized to get 2009 H1N1 vaccine?

- People 65 and older are the least likely to be infected with 2009 H1N1 flu, but, if they become infected, they are more likely than people in some other groups to develop serious complications from their illness.