

Franklin County Health Department
Flu News on H1N1
Frequently Asked Questions

Question 1: Will there be vaccine for H1N1 this fall?

~~Answer: CDC has ordered vaccine for H1N1 from 5 manufacturing companies. It is being tested~~
for efficacy and safety now and the first shipments are expected in October. It is estimated that Kansas will receive 1.2 million doses.

Question 2: What group or people are most susceptible or which groups of people are suffering the most severe cases of H1N1.

Answer: The highest incident rate is among children age 4 and under. Pregnant women are among those suffering the most serious illness. 80% of individuals who have been confirmed to have H1N1 are under the age of 35. Most hospitalized cases have underlying medical conditions. Morbid obesity is also a factor. *(Note: People 65 and older appear to be at less risk than younger individuals. They seem to have some natural immunity.)*

Question 3: I heard that the disease might become more severe this fall that it was this spring and summer.

Answer: At this time, the disease has remained moderate in severity.

Question 3: Who will get the vaccine?

Answer: Those individuals who are most severely affected or at risk of contracting the virus will be among the first to receive the vaccine. There is expected to be enough vaccine to vaccinate roughly half the U.S. population. During a typical year, only 20% - 30% of the population is vaccinated for seasonal influenza.

Question 4: If vaccine demand exceeds availability, who decides who gets the vaccine?

Answer: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention use scientific information to determine who is most at risk of contracting the virus and what groups are suffering the most hospitalizations and deaths. From that information, they determine who should receive the vaccine first. All public health departments are expected to follow CDC priority distribution guidance.

Question 5: Who are the priority groups?

Answer: As of August 1, 2009, the priority groups are

- a. Pregnant women
- b. Household and caregiver contacts of children younger than 6 months of age
- c. Health care and emergency medical services personnel with direct medical contact with patients or infectious materials
- d. Children from 6 months to 4 years
- e. Children with chronic medical conditions under 19 years of age

If vaccine is sufficient, others next in line will be

- f. persons aged 6 months through 24 years of age, and
- g. persons ages 25 – 64 years who have medical conditions associated with higher risk conditions.

Question 6: If I am not in one of those groups does that mean I won't be able to get the H1N1 vaccine?

Answer: Availability of vaccine will depend upon several factors: 1) the number of people in priority groups who elect to get the vaccine, 2) potential large outbreaks in other communities, and 3) actual amount of vaccine supplied (currently estimated to be 1.2 million doses for Kansas in October).