



Department of Health
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October 9, 2009

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As you may have heard, the vaccine against H1N1 influenza virus (sometimes called swine flu) is the best way to protect your child from this potentially serious disease and to prevent the spread of illness in schools. **The Department of Health is working with your child's school to give the H1N1 influenza vaccine to children in kindergarten through grade 12 at school.** Younger children (ages 6 months to 5 years) will be able to get vaccinated at their doctors' offices. There will be no cost to you for this vaccine and vaccination is voluntary.

Foster Parents: By now you should have received a separate communication with special instructions from the Department of Children, Youth and Families. If you have not, please immediately contact your child's case worker.

Consent Form

To have your child vaccinated at school, please sign and date the enclosed consent form and return it to the school. For school-aged children who do **not** get vaccinated in school, the vaccine is unlikely to be available in your physician's office or in other clinics until late December. The H1N1 vaccine is safe, and I plan to have my child get the vaccine. The H1N1 vaccine is made the same way as the seasonal flu vaccine by the same companies that make the seasonal flu vaccine. Some children (for example, children with egg allergies) need to receive the vaccine in their physicians' offices. In section 2 of the enclosed consent form, you will need to answer four questions about your child's allergies and existing medical conditions. Please note that if you answer "YES" to one or more of these questions, you will need to contact your child's doctor regarding whether or not your child should receive a flu vaccination at school. If you choose not to have your child vaccinated, there is no need to return the consent form. If you change your mind about having your child vaccinated before the scheduled vaccination date, you can contact your child's school.

School Clinics

School vaccination clinics will begin in November, or possibly earlier, depending on the availability of vaccine. Generally, elementary school children will be vaccinated in after-school clinics. A responsible adult should come with each child to these clinics. Middle and high school students will be vaccinated during the school day. Adults do not need to come with students to these clinics.

The school will notify you about clinic dates and times once we have enough vaccine to begin school-based clinics. The schedule will also be posted on the Department of Health's website. Please note that children under age 10 will require 2 doses of the vaccine, approximately one month apart. These second doses will be administered in school-based clinics and do not require a separate consent form.

Please visit our website at <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/> for updated information about the vaccine, vaccination clinics, or to download the consent form.

Sincerely,

David Gifford, MD
Director, Rhode Island Department of Health

**Rhode Island Department of Health
2009 H1N1 Influenza Vaccine Consent Form**



Section 1: Information about Child to Receive Vaccine (please print)

STUDENT'S NAME (Last)		(First)	(M.I.)	STUDENT'S DATE OF BIRTH Month _____ Day _____ Year _____	
PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN'S NAME (Last)		(First)	(M.I.)	STUDENT'S AGE	STUDENT'S GENDER M / F
ADDRESS			PARENT/GUARDIAN DAYTIME PHONE NUMBER:		
CITY	STATE	ZIP			
SCHOOL NAME			GRADE		

Section 2: Screening for Vaccine Eligibility

If your child has already been vaccinated with H1N1 influenza vaccine, please tell us the number of doses and dates of vaccination.

- Dose 1 Date received: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____
 Dose 2 Date received: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

The following questions will help us know if your child can get the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine. Please mark YES or NO for each question. If you answer, "YES" to one or more of the following questions, please contact your child's doctor to determine if he/she should be vaccinated at school.

	YES	NO
1. Does your child have a serious allergy to eggs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Does your child have any other serious allergies that you know of? Please list:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Has your child ever had a serious reaction to a previous dose of flu vaccine?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Has your child ever had Guillain-Barré Syndrome (a type of temporary severe muscle weakness) within 6 weeks after receiving a flu vaccine?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section 3: Consent

CONSENT FOR CHILD'S VACCINATION:

I have read or had explained to me the 2009-2010 Vaccine Information Statement for the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine and understand the risks and benefits.

I GIVE CONSENT to the Rhode Island Department of Health and its staff for my child named at the top of this form to be vaccinated at school. (If this form is not returned to the school, then your child will not be vaccinated.)

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian _____

Date: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

Section 5: Vaccination Record

FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY

Vaccine	Date Dose Administered	Route	Dose Number (1st or 2nd)	Vaccine Manufacturer	Lot Number	Name and Title of Vaccine Administrator
2009 H1N1	/ /	IM				
2009 H1N1	/ /	IM				

2009 H1N1 INFLUENZA VACCINE

INACTIVATED
(the “flu shot”)

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Many Vaccine Information Statements are available in Spanish and other languages. See www.immunize.org/vis.

1 What is 2009 H1N1 influenza?

2009 H1N1 influenza (also called Swine Flu) is caused by a new strain of influenza virus. It has spread to many countries.

Like other flu viruses, 2009 H1N1 spreads from person to person through coughing, sneezing, and sometimes through touching objects contaminated with the virus.

Signs of 2009 H1N1 can include:

- Fatigue • Fever • Sore Throat • Muscle Aches
- Chills • Coughing • Sneezing

Some people also have diarrhea and vomiting.

Most people feel better within a week. But some people get pneumonia or other serious illnesses. Some people have to be hospitalized and some die.

2 How is 2009 H1N1 different from regular (seasonal) flu?

Seasonal flu viruses change from year to year, but they are closely related to each other.

People who have had flu infections in the past usually have some immunity to seasonal flu viruses (their bodies have built up some ability to fight off the viruses).

The 2009 H1N1 flu is a new flu virus. It is very different from seasonal flu viruses.

Most people have little or no immunity to 2009 H1N1 flu (their bodies are not prepared to fight off the virus).

3 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine

Vaccines are available to protect against 2009 H1N1 influenza.

- These vaccines are made just like seasonal flu vaccines.
- They are expected to be as safe and effective as seasonal flu vaccines.
- They will not prevent “influenza-like” illnesses caused by other viruses.
- They will not prevent seasonal flu. *You should also get seasonal influenza vaccine, if you want to be protected against seasonal flu.*

Inactivated vaccine (vaccine that has killed virus in it) is injected into the muscle, like the annual flu shot. **This sheet describes the inactivated vaccine.**

A **live, intranasal** vaccine (the nasal spray vaccine) is also available. It is described in a separate sheet.

Some inactivated 2009 H1N1 vaccine contains a preservative called thimerosal to keep it free from germs. Some people have suggested that thimerosal might be related to autism. In 2004 a group of experts at the Institute of Medicine reviewed many studies looking into this theory, and found no association between thimerosal and autism. Additional studies since then reached the same conclusion.

4 Who should get 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine and when?

WHO

Groups recommended to receive 2009 H1N1 vaccine first are:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for infants younger than 6 months of age
- Health care and emergency medical personnel
- Anyone from 6 months through 24 years of age
- Anyone from 25 through 64 years of age with certain chronic medical conditions or a weakened immune system

As more vaccine becomes available, these groups should also be vaccinated:

- Healthy 25 through 64 year olds
- Adults 65 years and older

The Federal government is providing this vaccine for receipt on a voluntary basis. However, state law or employers may require vaccination for certain persons.

WHEN

Get vaccinated as soon as the vaccine is available.

Children through 9 years of age should get **two** doses of vaccine, about a month apart. Older children and adults need only one dose.

5 Some people should not get the vaccine or should wait

You should not get 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine if you have a **severe (life-threatening) allergy to eggs**, or to **any other substance in the vaccine**. *Tell the person giving you the vaccine if you have any severe allergies.*

Also tell them if you have ever had:

- a life-threatening allergic reaction after a dose of seasonal flu vaccine,
- Guillain Barré Syndrome (a severe paralytic illness also called GBS).

These may not be reasons to avoid the vaccine, but the medical staff can help you decide.

If you are moderately or severely ill, you might be advised to wait until you recover before getting the vaccine. If you have a mild cold or other illness, there is usually no need to wait.

Pregnant or breastfeeding women can get inactivated 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine.

Inactivated 2009 H1N1 vaccine may be given at the same time as other vaccines, including seasonal influenza vaccine.

6 What are the risks from 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine?

A vaccine, like any medicine, could cause a serious problem, such as a severe allergic reaction. But the risk of any vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small.

The virus in inactivated 2009 H1N1 vaccine has been killed, so you cannot get influenza from the vaccine.

The risks from inactivated 2009 H1N1 vaccine are similar to those from seasonal inactivated flu vaccine:

Mild problems:

- soreness, redness, tenderness, or swelling where the shot was given
- fainting (mainly adolescents)
- headache, muscle aches
- fever
- nausea

If these problems occur, they usually begin soon after the shot and last 1-2 days.

Severe problems:

- Life-threatening allergic reactions to vaccines are very rare. If they do occur, it is usually within a few minutes to a few hours after the shot.
- In 1976, an earlier type of swine flu vaccine was associated with cases of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS). Since then, flu vaccines have not been clearly linked to GBS.

7 What if there is a severe reaction?

What should I look for?

Any unusual condition, such as a high fever or behavior changes. Signs of a severe allergic reaction can include difficulty breathing, hoarseness or wheezing, hives, paleness, weakness, a fast heart beat or dizziness.

What should I do?

- Call a doctor, or get the person to a doctor right away.
- Tell the doctor what happened, the date and time it happened, and when the vaccination was given.
- Ask your provider to report the reaction by filing a Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) form. Or you can file this report through the VAERS website at www.vaers.hhs.gov, or by calling 1-800-822-7967.

VAERS does not provide medical advice.

8 Vaccine injury compensation

If you or your child has a reaction to the vaccine, your ability to sue is limited by law.

However, a federal program has been created to help pay for the medical care and other specific expenses of certain persons who have a serious reaction to this vaccine. For more information about this program, call 1-888-275-4772 or visit the program's website at: www.hrsa.gov/countermeasurescomp/default.htm.

9 How can I learn more?

- Ask your provider. They can give you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
 - Call 1-800-232-4636 (1-800-CDC-INFO) or
 - Visit CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu or www.cdc.gov/flu
- Visit the web at www.flu.gov



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION



Vaccine Information Statement
2009 H1N1 Inactivated Influenza Vaccine 10/2/09