

H1N1 flu 2009

Public Information Web Site: www.flu.gov



What You Should Know and Do this Flu Season If You Are 65 Years and Older

How is the
H1N1 affecting
those over 65?

The new 2009 H1N1 virus does not seem to be affecting people 65 years and older in the same way that the seasonal flu usually does. Most people who have gotten sick from this new virus have been younger. In fact, people 65 and older are the group that is least likely to get infected with this new virus. Laboratory tests on blood samples indicate that older people likely have some pre-existing immunity to the 2009 H1N1 flu virus.

Should I get the
H1N1 Vaccine?

People 65 and older are not in the target group recommended to get the earliest doses of 2009 H1N1 vaccine. This is because people age 65 and older are least likely to get sick with the 2009 H1N1 virus. Currently H1N1 vaccine is not licensed for people over 65.

Madison County Public Health will advertise when vaccine is available to the general public after all high risk groups are covered.

Should I get my
seasonal flu shot?

Yes when seasonal vaccine arrives, people 65 and older should get a flu shot.

It has been recognized for many years that older people are at greater risk of serious complications from the flu compared to young, healthy adults. It's estimated that 90 percent of seasonal flu-related deaths and more than 60 percent of seasonal flu-related hospitalizations in the United States each year occur in people 65 years and older. This is because human immune defenses become weaker with age. So Influenza can be a very serious disease for people 65 and older.

Madison County Public Health does not and can not get seasonal influenza vaccine for this flu period.

What Can I do to
protect myself this flu
season?

1. Get Your Seasonal Flu Shot: The best way to prevent seasonal flu is by getting a seasonal flu vaccination each year. As always, CDC recommends that people 65 and older get their regular, or "seasonal," flu vaccine as soon as it is available. This year is no exception as seasonal flu viruses are expected to circulate along with 2009 H1N1 viruses this flu season.
2. Take Everyday Preventative Actions, including covering coughs, washing hands often and avoiding people who are sick.
3. Seek medical advice quickly if you develop flu symptoms to see whether you might need medical evaluation or possibly treatment with antiviral medications. People 65 and older are prioritized to get antiviral drugs if they become sick with the flu according to CDC's guidance. Flu symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people may also have vomiting and diarrhea. People may be infected with the flu, including 2009 H1N1, and have respiratory symptoms without a fever.