



Department of Health Services
Public Health Division

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About H1N1 Vaccinations for Parents

Why are H1N1 flu vaccinations being given at schools?

Young people ages 6 months to 24 years old are a priority group for the H1N1 vaccine and offering the vaccine in schools for free provides a convenient and affordable way to get your child vaccinated. Participation in this program is completely voluntary.

Priority Groups Are:

Pregnant women, young people 6 months through 24 years of age; people who live with or provide care for infants younger than 6 months (e.g., parents, siblings, and day care providers); health care and emergency medical services personnel; and people 25 years through 64 years of age who have *chronic medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications*. The order of these groups does not indicate priority.

What types of vaccines will be offered at my child's school?

The H1N1 vaccine comes in two forms: a nasal spray and a shot. Children like the spray because there is no needle; it's fast, easy and painless. Both the nasal spray and shot are effective. Your child can receive the nasal spray if he/she does not have any underlying health conditions and is healthy. If your child has a chronic illness such as asthma, diabetes or a neurologic disorder he/she should get the injection form of the vaccine. Nurses at the school will screen children to see if they can get the nasal spray based on your answers on the consent form. The consent form will be sent to families several weeks before your child's school vaccine clinic.

Who can get vaccinated at the school clinics?

These clinics are being offered only to BUSD students at their assigned school. For other family members talk to your health care provider and check the city of Berkeley Public health website <http://www.ci.berkeley.ca.us/publichealth> for updates on vaccine availability.

Will the H1N1 vaccine be safe for my child?

The H1N1 vaccine has been produced the same as the seasonal flu vaccine using the same procedures and the same manufacturing plants. Over the years, hundreds of millions of Americans have received seasonal flu vaccines. The most common side effects following flu vaccinations are mild, such as soreness, redness, tenderness or swelling where the shot was given. We have had a long history of providing safe seasonal flu vaccines and expect the H1N1 vaccine to be just as safe.

Will the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine contain thimerosal?

The nasal spray form of the vaccine (which most healthy children can receive) will not contain thimerosal. Thimerosal is a preservative added in small amounts to the injectable vaccines offered at the schools to prevent contamination.

For additional information on the H1N1 flu vaccination please visit www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu and www.flu.gov.

Together let's keep our children and schools healthy!