



## UPDATE ON THE H1N1 VIRUS

Now that a majority of you have received your seasonal flu shot, or are planning to receive it within the next couple of weeks, RMI wants to provide you with an update in regards to the H1N1 virus and the vaccine that is now available to protect you from this virus. The first batch of the H1N1 vaccine has already been distributed to many states and you may be wondering if you need the vaccine for yourself and your family members, if you qualify to receive the vaccine, and what symptoms to watch for during this year's flu season.

If you have already received your regular seasonal flu vaccine, it is important to know that the vaccine you received is NOT expected to protect you against the H1N1 virus.

The federal government has purchased 250 million doses of the 2009 H1N1 vaccine. There is a shot vaccine and a nasal spray vaccine. It is expected that there will be enough vaccine for anyone who chooses to get vaccinated, however, these 250 million doses are not all available at this time. It is estimated that approximately 40 million doses will be available by the end of October. The nasal doses have been released to the individual state's health departments and the shot vaccine will be arriving shortly. Both vaccines are being distributed according to the following guidelines, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)):

Pregnant women, people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age, healthcare and emergency medical services personnel, persons between the ages of 6 months and 24 years old, individuals ages 25 through 64 years who are at higher risk for H1N1 due to chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems.

Once the demand for vaccine for these individuals has been met, providers should be able to vaccinate everyone between the ages of 25 and 64 years. The last age group to receive the vaccine will be those individuals age 65 and over, as the H1N1 virus does not seem to target individuals in this age bracket.

The H1N1 vaccine is being provided free of charge, as the federal government is covering the costs of the vaccine and related supplies to those who qualify according to the guidelines above (there may be a small fee charged to administer the vaccine depending upon where you receive the vaccine). You will want to contact your health care provider to find out if the vaccine is available in your area and if you qualify to receive the vaccine from the first batch of doses. Here in Utah, you can log on to the Utah Department of Health's website ([www.health.utah.gov](http://www.health.utah.gov)) to locate facilities that currently have the vaccine available. In Washington, you can access the Department of Health at ([www.doh.wa.gov](http://www.doh.wa.gov)) or GroupHealth's website at (<http://www.ghc.org/healthAndWellness/?topic=conditions/coldsAndFlu>). Other states will also have similar websites. Children ages 6 months to 9 years of age will need two doses of the vaccine and individuals 10 and over will need one dose. Children younger than 6 months are too young to receive the H1N1 vaccine. Please refer to the CDC's webpage, as well as consulting your own medical provider, to determine which form of the vaccine is right for you.

(<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-inact-h1n1.pdf>)

(<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-laiv-h1n1.pdf>)

The Salt Lake Valley Health Department has produced an H1N1 flier that explains who is considered high-risk for the virus and how each individual should manage their symptoms. ([www.ehs.utah.edu/docs/h1n1WhatToDoFlyer.pdf](http://www.ehs.utah.edu/docs/h1n1WhatToDoFlyer.pdf))

Information taken from the following websites:

Centers For Disease Control [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

WebMd [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com)

Utah Department of Health [www.health.utah.gov](http://www.health.utah.gov)

The information in this article provides general information only and should not be construed as medical advice. You should consult a physician in regards to all matters concerning your health and the health of your family.