

Flu Vaccines in 2009: What Older Adults Need to Know

What's new about flu shots this year?

This year, there are two flu vaccines:

- **“Seasonal” (or regular) flu vaccine** is offered every year. This is especially important for older adults and anyone with a chronic health condition. The seasonal flu shot will *not* protect against the H1N1 (swine flu) disease.
- **H1N1 (swine flu) vaccine** is new this year to protect against a new world-wide (pandemic) flu strain. This new flu strain has not yet made as many older adults sick as seasonal flu usually does.

Can I get both vaccines?

Yes. All adults age 50 and older should get their regular “seasonal” flu shot now. But you may need to wait until later in the Fall until there is enough H1N1 (swine flu) vaccine. Keep checking with your doctor, pharmacy or local health department.

What about getting the shots together?

To get protected as soon as possible, it's recommended to get a seasonal flu shot right away. You can go back to get the H1N1 shot later this Fall and if you have not yet received your seasonal flu shot you can get both flu shots at the same visit.

When can older adults get the new H1N1 (swine flu) vaccine?

The H1N1 vaccine will be in limited supply during October, but is expected to be more widely available in November and later. ***Anyone who wants the H1N1 vaccine should be able to get it in November or later.***

- **If you're younger than 65, AND have a chronic health condition** (like asthma, diabetes, or a weakened immune system), you are recommended to get H1N1 vaccine as soon as it's available. You may be at higher risk for H1N1 flu complications.
- **If you live with or care for a baby**, you are recommended to get H1N1 vaccine as soon as it's available. You'll protect a child you love from flu.
- **If you're an older adult 65 or over**, you may have some natural immunity to the new H1N1 flu disease. You will be able to get the H1N1 vaccine a little later this fall.