

H1N1 Flu Information



October 2009

Information for Parents – H1N1 Flu Shots

Enough H1N1 flu vaccine has been ordered for all Manitobans who want or need to be vaccinated. The first batch of vaccine is available to Manitobans who are most at risk for severe H1N1 illness. As more batches of the vaccine arrive, the H1N1 shot will be offered to other Manitobans.

It is recommended that children younger than five should get the H1N1 shot from the first batch of vaccine (see age details below), as should children of any age with chronic illnesses or weakened immune systems. Children aged five and older who are otherwise healthy should get it when later batches arrive.

Regional health authorities are planning large H1N1 vaccination clinics so Manitobans can be immunized as quickly as possible. Classroom-by-classroom immunizations in schools are not planned for administering the H1N1 flu shot. Instead, Manitoba Health and Healthy Living encourages families to visit a large immunization clinic in their region.

Manitobans who should get the H1N1 flu shot first include:

- **children aged six months to under five years old;**
- **anyone of Aboriginal ancestry (First Nations, Métis or Inuit);**
- **disadvantaged individuals (for example, the homeless);**
- **people living in remote or isolated areas;**
- **people under 65 with a chronic medical condition or other risks including severe obesity, substance abuse or alcoholism;**
- **anyone with a weakened immune system or those who live with or care for them;**
- **those who live with or care for infants under six months old;**
- **single parents or anyone solely responsible for a dependent;**
- **health-care workers and medical first responders; and**
- **pregnant women**

The Public Health Agency of Canada is recommending children from six months to nine years of age should receive the vaccine in two half-doses, given 21 days apart. School age children have not been identified as most at risk for severe illness unless they also have risk conditions.

The H1N1 flu shot has met national standards for safety and effectiveness. Vaccines have been shown to be very safe and are one of the best ways to prevent illness. At the flu shot clinic, your family will be given more information about the vaccine and public health staff will be available to answer any questions you may have. Seasonal flu shots may also be available for eligible Manitobans at the same time. When more batches of H1N1 vaccine arrive, shots may be available through doctors' offices as well as RHA flu clinics.

Information about upcoming clinics is available from your regional health authority or from **Health Links – Info Santé** at **788-8200** or **1-888-315-9257**. To learn more about H1N1, Manitoba's flu shot priority groups, vaccine safety and regional plans for immunization, visit www.manitoba.ca.