



**Sept. 30, 2009**

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## **H1N1 vaccine shipments on the way to Oregon; more coming soon**

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As the first H1N1 vaccine doses are being shipped around the country, Oregon public health officials expect there will be enough vaccine in Oregon so that widespread vaccination can begin around the middle of October at local flu clinics, with a particular focus on key priority groups.

"Over the course of the flu season we are expecting to have a large enough supply to vaccinate everyone with the H1N1 vaccine," says Mel Kohn, M.D., public health director for Oregon. "With these first shipments, children, pregnant women, health care workers and others on the priority list should be first in line." The priority list is:

- Children and young adults 6 months to 24 years old;
- Pregnant women;
- People caring for or living with infants under 6 months of age;
- People aged 25 to 64 with medical conditions that put them at a higher risk for influenza-related complications;
- Health care workers;
- Frontline law enforcement and public safety workers.

It is expected that the first shipment to Oregon will be distributed directly to Oregon counties on a per capita basis. The first vaccine doses will arrive mostly in nasal spray form, although over the course of the season both the nasal spray and injectable vaccine should be available, Kohn said.

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Most people should be able to get vaccinated by their health care provider, although other options will be available across the state as well. State and local public health officials will spread the word about the availability of H1N1 flu shot clinics once vaccine begins arriving in substantial quantities. Information on vaccine availability will be posted on the state public health Web site at [www.flu.oregon.gov](http://www.flu.oregon.gov) and will also be available from the state hotline at 1-800-978-3040.

"All local public health departments will be working to ensure vaccines are quickly and broadly distributed across the state and people will have a wide variety of options, whether through their health care provider or a community flu clinic," says Dr. Gary Oxman, health officer for Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties.

The nasal spray vaccine is as effective as a shot for healthy people between ages 2 and 49. However, health officials recommend that some groups wait for the injectable vaccine, including: pregnant women, children younger than 2, and people with asthma and other chronic respiratory diseases. Injectable vaccine is expected to begin arriving in substantial quantities later in October.

Regular seasonal flu shots, which do not protect against H1N1, are also recommended, and are currently available. Information on where to get one is available on the Public Health Flu Web site at [www.flu.oregon.gov](http://www.flu.oregon.gov) or from the state hotline at 1-800-978-3040.

"We ask that everyone keep informed about H1N1 in Oregon and how they can best protect themselves and their families," says Kohn. "Together we can slow the spread of this flu as much as possible and reduce the impact on our state."

Since September 1, 2009, there have been 16 hospitalizations in Oregon from the flu: six were confirmed H1N1 and the rest influenza A. One death was reported in September.

Public health experts continue to advise the public to take basic precautions to help slow the spread of all influenza:

- Wash your hands;
- Cover your cough;
- Stay home if you are sick.

For more information on where to get the vaccine when it becomes available, please visit the [Oregon Department of Human Services Web site](http://www.oregon.gov/Health/Flu) or call the Oregon Public Health Flu hotline: 1-800-978-3040.