



Schools and Flu: Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

I heard that H1N1 flu has “peaked,” does that mean the worst is over?

Flu is very unpredictable. While there was a substantial rise of H1N1 cases in the fall, followed by a decline in cases just before the New Year, flu can continue to spread into spring. In fact, many past flu seasons did not peak until March. Therefore, it is important to practice good respiratory hygiene (washing hands, covering coughs, staying home when ill) all year-round.

I was not among the H1N1 vaccine priority groups, should I still get vaccinated?

When H1N1 vaccine first arrived, it was in short supply so it was important to vaccinate and protect those that were more likely to have serious consequences from flu illness (i.e., pregnant women, children, those with weakened immune systems). The H1N1 flu vaccine is now widely available in Los Angeles County and is appropriate for anyone over 6 months of age for whom the vaccine is not medically contraindicated.

My child has not been vaccinated yet, should my child still get vaccinated?

The 2009 H1N1 virus is still causing sickness and vaccination continues to offer the best protection against the virus. Getting vaccinated against flu not only protects your child, it protects your loved ones and others in our communities.

Where can I get the H1N1 vaccine?

You should first check with your regular health care provider. For those without health insurance or a usual source of care, H1N1 vaccine is now available at certain Los Angeles County Public Health centers at no cost. For locations and operating hours of clinics or health centers, visit Public Health's website at www.publichealth.lacounty.gov or call the Los Angeles County Information Line at 2-1-1. Vaccine is also available through many community clinics and some retail pharmacies for a small fee.

Who should not receive flu vaccination?

Some people can have a bad reaction to flu vaccines and should not be vaccinated. These groups include those with:

- allergies to eggs
- allergies to latex
- a past history of Guillain-Barré syndrome
- a past history of bad reaction to flu vaccine

If you are unsure about flu vaccination, please talk to your doctor.

Will my child need an H1N1 vaccination next year?

A separate H1N1 vaccine was needed this year because this particular strain of flu was identified after seasonal flu vaccine went into production. H1N1 will most likely be a component of next year's seasonal vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and doctors recommend annual flu vaccinations for all children aged 6 months through 18 years.

- ★ For more information on flu please visit our schools website at: www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/schools
- ★ Our September 2009 Flu FAQs for Schools can be accessed here: <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/media/docs/FINALschoolsFAQSept2009.pdf>
- ★ Take our free on-line training class about flu: it's fast, fun, and contains lots of information specific to schools about flu! www.laschoolhealth.com