



Public Health
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The New Flu (2009 H1N1) & Older Adults

While media attention remains focused on the new 2009 H1N1 virus' anticipated impact on the school-aged population this Fall, the Burlington County Health Department would like to assure you that the health and safety of our senior citizens remains one of our priorities.

The **good news** for you is your age may provide you protection against this new influenza virus. One of the lessons learned from the outbreak this past spring was that older adults (over 64 years old) do not appear to be at increased risk of 2009 H1N1-related complications. In fact, many older adults appear to have some degree of immunity to this new virus. Experts suspect this immunity is the result of exposure to a similar influenza virus that was circulating in the 1920s through 1950s when you were a child or young adult.

Children and young adults are the most susceptible to falling ill from 2009 H1N1 influenza and are more likely to end up in the hospital than older adults. Therefore, priority groups for this vaccine will be children, young adults up to age 24, pregnant women, household contacts of babies under six months old, adults less than 65 years old with chronic medical conditions, and healthcare workers.

However, **you will remain a priority group for the Seasonal Influenza vaccine.** While we anticipate the 2009 H1N1 virus will dominate this influenza season, we do expect that regular Seasonal Influenza viruses covered by the Seasonal Influenza vaccine will also be circulating. **Therefore it is important that you receive the Seasonal Influenza vaccine.**

(See other side for more information)



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Key Points

2009 H1N1 Flu Vaccine

- ❖ Adults older than 64 appear to be less likely to get sick from the 2009 H1N1 flu and are much less likely to end up in the hospital than children or young adults.
- ❖ While the 2009 H1N1 influenza strain is receiving all of the attention, we expect regular **Seasonal Influenza** to also be circulating this year.
- ❖ **Seasonal Flu** immunization, which will protect you against the non-2009 H1N1 strains of influenza, will be available this year and **seniors are strongly encouraged to get one.**
- ❖ Pregnant women, household contacts of babies less than 6 months old, individuals from 6 months to 24 years old, adults less than 65 who have a chronic medical condition, and healthcare workers have been identified as priority groups to receive the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine.
- ❖ If one of your loved ones falls into one of the priority groups listed above, please help to protect them from the 2009 H1N1 influenza by encouraging them to receive the 2009 H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available this Fall.
- ❖ While you most likely already have some immunity to the 2009 H1N1 virus, you will be able to receive the 2009 H1N1 vaccine if you wish later in the year once the priority groups have been immunized.