

What to Know about the Swine Flu Vaccine

Getting vaccinated is the best protection against developing H1N1 flu (swine flu). A new vaccine for swine flu is available for people who want to take it. The vaccine comes in two forms, a shot or nose spray. Talk to your health care provider about which one is right for you.

Who needs a swine flu vaccine?

These target groups are recommended to get the swine flu vaccine before others because they may be at higher risk for developing serious health problems if they become ill with swine flu:

- Pregnant women.
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months old.
- Health care and emergency medical services workers.
- Children and young adults 6 months to 24 years old, especially those with chronic health problems.
- People 25 to 64 years old with chronic health problems.

If you are not in one of these target groups:

All other people 25 to 64 years old should get the vaccine after the above groups have received it.

If you are 65 or older:

The risk for infection among people 65 and older appears to be less than the risk for younger age groups. People in this age group should be first in line to get the seasonal flu vaccine. They should wait until other groups have been vaccinated to get the swine flu vaccine.

When should I get the swine flu vaccine?

If you are in a target group, you should get it when it is made available. Talk to your health care provider or local health department about whether you should get the swine flu shot or nose spray.

Where can I get the swine flu vaccine?

The vaccine is available now in limited supply for people in some target groups. When the vaccine is more widely available, clinic schedules will be posted on the Health Alerts Web site (healthalerts.ky.gov) and given by the state flu hotline at 1-877-843-7727.

How safe is the swine flu vaccine?

The swine flu vaccine is expected to be as safe as the seasonal flu vaccine. The swine flu vaccine is made in the same way and in the same places as the seasonal flu vaccine. Neither vaccine contains adjuvants. Some preservative-free vaccine is available. Talk with your health care provider about the benefits and risks of the vaccine for protection against swine flu.

What you can do to prevent flu:



- Wash your hands in warm, soapy water for 15 to 20 seconds.
- If you cannot wash your hands, use an alcohol-based hand gel.
- Teach children good health habits.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue. If you do not have a tissue, cough into the crook of your elbow, not your hand.
- Stay at home if you are sick and contact your health care provider.
- Get a swine flu vaccine (nose spray or shot.) You may need a seasonal flu vaccine and a swine flu vaccine.
- Stay informed.

For more information:

- Flu information — flu.gov
- Kentucky flu information — healthalerts.ky.gov
- Kentucky flu hotline — 1-877-843-7727
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention information hotline — 1-800-CDC-INFO



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Is the swine flu vaccine mandatory?

No. You choose whether or not to take the swine flu vaccine. No one will make you take it.

How much does the vaccine cost?

The vaccine itself is free. Some health care providers may charge you or your health insurance a fee for giving the vaccine. In any case, nobody will be turned away for inability to pay.