

H1N1 Vaccine Safety – Important Information

to help you make an informed decision about getting your child vaccinated

Do you have questions and concerns about the H1N1 vaccine? Below are some answers to help set the record straight.

- The H1N1 flu vaccine is manufactured using the same companies, process and facilities as the seasonal flu vaccine. It is in no way “experimental”.
- H1N1 flu vaccine has undergone clinical trials to ensure safety and efficacy for both children and adults, including pregnant women.
- As with seasonal flu vaccine, the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is requiring the same process for the release of H1N1 flu vaccine.
- The virus in the H1N1 flu shot is inactivated (killed) so it cannot cause the H1N1 flu.
- The virus in the nasal spray form (“FluMist”) is alive but weakened and changed so it can’t grow in the lungs and cause illness. Children receive a number of other live vaccines (MMR, Chickenpox) and these vaccines are safe. The vaccine was tested and licensed for healthy people age 2-49. It was not tested in those with high risk medical conditions, so these people cannot receive flu mist.
- There is no adjuvant in any influenza vaccine distributed in the United States. An adjuvant can boost the effectiveness of vaccine and is being used in some other countries.
- Some H1N1 vaccine contains thimerosal (a preservative to prevent bacterial growth in the bottle of vaccine) Current scientific research reviewed by the Minnesota Department of Health shows no evidence of harm caused by small amounts of thimerosal in vaccines, beyond possible minor reactions like redness and swelling at the injection site. Thimerosal is ethyl mercury, not methyl mercury. Ethyl mercury is rapidly removed from the body and cannot get into the brain. A tuna sandwich has 5 times the mercury that is in a dose of flu vaccine.
- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) will be closely monitoring for any side effects associated with the vaccine. This is done for all vaccines.
- It will not be a state mandate that you get the vaccine. Before receiving the H1N1 flu vaccine, you will get a federally-required fact sheet, called a vaccine information statement (VIS). It covers the risks and benefits of the vaccine.

Source: MDH H1N1 Flu Vaccine: Setting the Record Straight (October 2009)