

Questions & Answers: 2009 H1N1 Nasal Spray Vaccine (Adapted)

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Influenza A (H1N1) Monovalent Nasal-Spray Flu Vaccine (Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine [LAIV])

What is the nasal spray flu vaccine?

The nasal spray flu vaccine (sometimes called LAIV for Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine) is a vaccine made with live, weakened viruses that cannot grow at normal body temperature and is given via a nasal sprayer. This vaccine was approved for seasonal influenza viruses in 2003 and tens of millions of doses of the vaccine have been given in the United States.

Who can be vaccinated with the 2009 H1N1 nasal-spray flu vaccine (LAIV)?

The 2009 H1N1 nasal spray vaccine is recommended for use in healthy* people 2 years through 49 years of age who are not pregnant. (*"healthy" indicates persons who do not have an underlying medical condition that predisposes them to influenza complications)

Who should *not* be vaccinated with the 2009 H1N1 nasal-spray flu vaccine LAIV?

Certain people should not get a nasal spray flu vaccine, including the 2009 H1N1 nasal spray vaccine. This includes:

- People younger than 2 years of age;
- Pregnant women;
- People 50 years of age and older;
- People with a medical condition that places them at higher risk for complications from influenza, including those with chronic heart or lung disease, such as asthma or reactive airways disease; people with medical conditions such as diabetes or kidney failure; or people with illnesses that weaken the immune system, or who take medications that can weaken the immune system;
- Children younger than 5 years old with a history of recurrent wheezing;
- Children or adolescents receiving aspirin therapy;
- People who have had Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS), a rare disorder of the nervous system, within 6 weeks of getting a flu vaccine,
- People who have a severe allergy to chicken eggs or who are allergic to any of the nasal spray vaccine components.

Can pregnant women be in contact with someone who has gotten the nasal spray vaccine (LAIV)?

Yes. A pregnant woman can be in close contact with someone who has gotten the nasal spray flu vaccine (LAIV). A pregnant woman can also administer (give) a nasal spray vaccine (LAIV). Because the viruses in the nasal spray vaccine are attenuated or weakened, vaccine viruses are unlikely to cause any illness symptoms, even if an unvaccinated person inadvertently gets vaccine viruses in their nose.

Can the nasal-spray flu vaccine be given to patients when they are ill?

The nasal-spray flu vaccine can be given to people with minor illnesses (e.g., diarrhea or mild upper respiratory tract infection with or without fever). However, if nasal congestion is present that might limit delivery of the vaccine to the nasal lining, then delaying of vaccination until the nasal congestion is reduced should be considered.

Can people receiving the nasal-spray flu vaccine LAIV pass the vaccine viruses to others?

In clinical studies, transmission of vaccine viruses to close contacts occurred only rarely. The current estimated risk of getting infected with vaccine virus after close contact with a person vaccinated with the nasal-spray flu vaccine is low (0.6%-2.4%). Because the viruses are weakened, infection is unlikely to result in influenza illness symptoms since the vaccine viruses have not been shown change into typical or naturally occurring influenza viruses.

Can contacts of people with weakened immune systems get the nasal-spray flu vaccine?

People who are in contact with others with severely weakened immune systems when they are being cared for in a protective environment (for example, people with hematopoietic stem cell transplants), should not get the nasal spray vaccine, including the 2009 H1N1 nasal spray vaccine if they will come into contact with the severely immunocompromised person within 7 days of vaccination. People who have contact with others with lesser degrees of immunosuppression (for example, people with diabetes, people with asthma taking corticosteroids, or people infected with HIV) can get the nasal spray vaccine.

What side effects are associated with the nasal-spray flu vaccine?

In children, side effects can include runny nose, headache, wheezing, vomiting, muscle aches, and fever. In adults, side effects can include runny nose, headache, sore throat, and cough. Fever is not a common side effect in adults receiving the nasal spray flu vaccine.

How many doses of nasal spray vaccine are needed?

In adults, only one dose of 2009 H1N1 vaccine, including the 2009 H1N1 nasal spray vaccine, is needed for protection.

All children 2 through 9 years of age getting a 2009 H1N1 vaccine will need two doses of 2009 H1N1 vaccine (either the 2009 H1N1 flu shot or the 2009 H1N1 nasal spray vaccine. The second dose should be given 28 or more days after the first dose.

Does the nasal spray flu vaccine contain thimerosal?

No, neither the seasonal nor the 2009 H1N1 nasal-spray flu vaccines contain thimerosal or any other preservative.