



H1N1 VACCINE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is H1N1 Influenza?

H1N1 Influenza, also known as 'swine flu,' is a new strain of influenza. This strain has not infected people before the current pandemic, so most people have no immunity to it. Without immunity, anyone can catch it. It is different from the seasonal flu, although the symptoms are much the same.

Why do we need an H1N1 vaccine?

A vaccine will help people develop immunity against H1N1, which will either prevent them from getting sick with H1N1 flu or make infection less severe. Vaccinating the public also helps protect those who are at high risk for severe illness should they get the infection.

Is the H1N1 vaccine available at Fort Carson?

Not yet. We expect to receive vaccine by early November but do not have specific dates yet. If you received a flu shot already this year, it was a seasonal influenza shot. When it is available, we will let the public know when, where, and who should get it.

Is the H1N1 vaccine safe?

The H1N1 vaccine, both the shot and the flumist nasal spray, are made in the same way that seasonal influenza vaccine is made. This means they are as safe as any FDA-approved flu vaccine.

Where does the vaccine come from?

Fort Carson will receive the vaccine from two places: A Department of Defense supply, and a State of Colorado supply. Active Duty soldiers will receive vaccine from the DoD supply, and beneficiaries will receive vaccine from the State of Colorado Supply. The vaccine from each supply must be used for the people it is designated for.

Who will get the vaccine?

Active Duty soldiers will receive the vaccine, with deploying soldiers getting theirs first. Beneficiaries will be offered the vaccine based on whether they are high risk for severe illness. This means the first ones to get the shot will likely be pregnant women, health care providers, caregivers of children less than 6 months old, children and young adults through age 24, and adults age 25 to 64 who have medical problems that weaken their immune system or put them at higher risk for illness. Once these groups have been vaccinated, the vaccine will likely be offered to everyone who wants it, as supply allows. These are the same guidelines that will be used by other health care providers in the community.

How can I get more information on the H1N1 infection and the vaccine?

Good resources include www.cdc.gov and www.pandemic.gov. The Evans Army Community Hospital website at www.evans.amedd.army.mil also has a link to H1N1 information. As we have more vaccine information available, the flu hotline at 719-526-6422 will be updated. Also, check the Mountaineer for updates. Your health care provider can also answer questions about H1N1.