

## FLU BULLETIN #2

Manitoba Health and Healthy Living has released the list of Manitobans who would benefit the most from getting the H1N1 flu shot and has confirmed the province's regional health authorities will begin delivering H1N1 immunizations the week of Oct. 26.

The H1N1 flu shot is expected to help protect Manitobans against the new pandemic strain of the flu now in circulation. Manitobans are strongly encouraged to get the H1N1 flu shot at no charge at flu clinics run by their regional health authorities.

Plans for the flu clinics are now being finalized by regional health authorities (RHAs). RHAs will have the most current information about flu clinics and vaccine delivery in their areas.

The vaccine is expected to arrive in batches and the early clinics will be for Manitobans who should get the shot first. Once these Manitobans are immunized over the course of a few weeks, the H1N1 flu shot will be made available to every Manitoban who needs or wants to be vaccinated and will benefit from vaccination.

Manitobans who should get the H1N1 flu shot first include:

- . children aged six months to under five years old;
- . anyone of Aboriginal ancestry (First Nations, Métis or Inuit);
- . disadvantaged individuals (for example, the homeless);
- . people living in remote or isolated areas;
- . people under 65 with a chronic medical condition or other risks including severe obesity, substance abuse or alcoholism;
- . anyone with a weakened immune system or those who live with or care for them;
- . those who live with or care for infants under six months old;
- . single parents or anyone solely responsible for a dependent;
- . health-care workers and medical first responders; and
- . pregnant women

In November, an unadjuvanted shot recommended for pregnant women will be available. Women who are pregnant can wait until that shot arrives or they can talk to their health-care provider about the pros and cons of getting the adjuvanted vaccine sooner.

It is recommended that children between the ages of six months and nine years receive two half doses of the shot with 21 days between the first and second shot.

Manitoba expects to have 134,000 vaccine doses the week of Oct. 26 and subsequent deliveries of vaccine will continue weekly.

Manitoba's priority groups are based on national recommendations and have been tailored to address the province's conditions and experiences with H1N1 flu so far.

As more vaccine arrives, the H1N1 shot will be offered at flu shot clinics to other Manitobans who need or want it and are expected to benefit from it. Later, it may also be available from family doctors and other health-care providers.

The H1N1 flu shot will be available for all adults and children five years of age or older who need or want it and are expected to benefit from it, once additional batches of vaccine arrive. All employers are encouraged to identify people who provide services that are critical to meeting the necessities of life and support the daily operation of Manitoba communities, particularly where there are limited numbers of people who can perform those jobs if someone becomes ill. People

who work directly with swine and poultry should also be vaccinated once additional batches arrive because this can help limit the spread of illness in these animals. Individuals in these groups are encouraged to get an H1N1 flu shot early.

The H1N1 flu vaccine is not licensed for infants under six months of age. People who are allergic to eggs or other influenza vaccine components should not be vaccinated. The H1N1 vaccine is also not recommended for anyone who has had a lab-confirmed diagnosis of H1N1 flu.

During the H1N1 flu clinics, Manitobans who are eligible for the seasonal flu shot may be offered both flu shots if they have not yet received their seasonal shot this year. Both flu shots have been designed to provide protection against the known flu viruses expected to be circulating in Manitoba this year. Manitobans aged 65 and older should also get a pneumococcal shot at the same time as the seasonal flu shot unless they have had a pneumococcal shot in the past. Most adults only need one pneumococcal shot in their lifetime.

Health Canada has assessed available data on the safety, quality and effectiveness of the H1N1 vaccine and concluded the benefit-to-risk profile is favourable for active immunization against the H1N1 in an officially declared pandemic situation. As part of the authorization, the manufacturer will be required to continue submitting data on the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine. This approach is similar to that used in other countries.

For more information about H1N1 or to find links to flu shot clinics operated by regional health authorities, visit [www.manitoba.ca](http://www.manitoba.ca).