



## H1N1 Influenza (Flu) Vaccine Facts for Pregnant Women

*The following questions and answers are intended to provide you with the most current information about the H1N1 flu shot. As new information becomes available, it will be posted on the flu website at [manitoba.ca](http://manitoba.ca). Please check our website often to be sure you have the most up-to-date information.*

### **Are pregnant women at greater risk from H1N1 flu?**

Pregnant women are not more likely to get the pandemic H1N1 flu virus. However, if they do get it, they are about five times more likely to be hospitalized and about three times more likely to suffer serious complications. To date, of the pregnant women who have been hospitalized with H1N1 flu, over two-thirds were in their third trimester.

### **What is the H1N1 flu vaccine?**

The pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine is a shot (injection) that makes your immune system develop antibodies (immunity) against the H1N1 flu virus. The virus in the vaccine has been killed, so it cannot give you an actual infection and cannot give you pandemic flu.

### **Is the H1N1 flu shot mandatory for anyone?**

No. In Manitoba, all immunizations, including the H1N1 flu shot, are voluntary and given only after informed consent.

### **Is getting the H1N1 flu shot recommended for pregnant women?**

There will be two types of H1N1 flu vaccine available in Canada - one with adjuvant and one without. An adjuvant is a substance added to vaccine to boost people's immune response to the vaccine.

Immunization is the most effective way to prevent illness and protect your baby's health. The Public Health Agency of Canada has recommended that pregnant women at any stage of their pregnancy should receive the H1N1 flu shot without adjuvant. Although there is no evidence that the H1N1 flu shot with adjuvant is unsafe for pregnant women, this kind of vaccine hasn't been tested in pregnant women. So the vaccine without adjuvant is the first choice for pregnant women. Vaccine without adjuvant is made the same way as the regular seasonal flu shot, which has been used safely in pregnant women for many years.

The agency has also advised that if the H1N1 flu shot without adjuvant is not easily available and pandemic H1N1 flu rates are high or increasing, women who are more than 20 weeks pregnant or women at any stage of pregnancy who have a chronic medical condition (like asthma or diabetes) can consider getting the H1N1 flu shot with adjuvant. Women who are less than 20 weeks pregnant and are healthy can wait to get the vaccine without adjuvant. Pregnant women should talk to their health care provider about which pandemic flu shot is best for them.

### **For more information:**

Contact your health care provider, call Health Links – Info Santé at 788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257 (toll-free) or visit [manitoba.ca/flu](http://manitoba.ca/flu).