



Healthy people and places

2009 H1N1 Nasal Spray Vaccine Questions & Answers

Adapted from: http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/nasalspray_qa.htm

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 type of vaccine has been used for seasonal influenza viruses since 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?

Healthy people 2 years to 49 years of age who are not pregnant. The following people should not get nasal spray: infants younger than 6 months, people over 49 years, anyone with a weakened immune system; anyone with a long-term health problem such as heart disease; kidney or liver disease; lung disease; metabolic disease such as diabetes; asthma; anemia and other blood disorders; anyone with asthma or children under 5 years with one or more episodes of wheezing during the past year; anyone with certain muscle or nerve disorders (such as cerebral palsy) that can lead to breathing or swallowing problems; anyone in close contact with a person with a *severely* weakened immune system (requiring care in a protected environment, such as a bone marrow transplant unit), children or adolescents on long-term aspirin treatment.

Can the nasal spray flu vaccine give you the flu?

No, it cannot cause the flu, but it can cause mild, short-lasting symptoms in some people. The viruses in the nasal spray flu vaccine are attenuated (weakened). The weakened viruses are cold-adapted, which means they are designed to only cause infection at the cooler temperatures found within the nose. The viruses cannot infect the lungs or other areas where warmer temperatures exist. Some children and young adults 2 years to 17 years of age have reported experiencing mild reactions after receiving seasonal nasal spray flu vaccine, including runny nose, nasal congestion or cough, chills, tiredness/weakness, sore throat and headache. Some adults 18 years to 49 years of age have reported runny nose or nasal congestion, cough, chills, tiredness/weakness, sore throat and headache. These side effects are mild and short-lasting, especially when compared to symptoms of influenza infection.

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

Yes, but this is rare and it is unlikely the vaccine virus will cause symptoms in other people if passed. 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%). The vaccine viruses have not been shown to change into typical or naturally occurring influenza viruses.

Are there any contraindications to giving breastfeeding mothers the 2009 H1N1 vaccine?

No. Breastfeeding is not a contraindication for the nasal spray flu vaccine.

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

Yes. A pregnant woman can be in close contact with someone who has gotten the nasal spray flu vaccine. The nasal spray vaccine against seasonal influenza viruses has been used in millions of school children and healthy adults since it was licensed, and there have been no reports of pregnant women becoming ill after exposure to their vaccinated children or other family members.

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

Most contacts of people with weakened immune systems can 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 seasonal flu or 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.

How effective is the nasal spray seasonal flu vaccine?

In one large study among children aged 15-85 months, the seasonal nasal-spray flu vaccine reduced the chance of influenza illness by 92%. In a study among adults, the participants were not specifically tested for influenza. However, the study found 19% fewer severe febrile respiratory tract illnesses, 24% fewer respiratory tract illnesses with fever, 23-27% fewer days of illness, 13-28% fewer lost work days, 15-41% fewer health care provider visits, and 43-47% less use of antibiotics compared with placebo. A recent study suggested that seasonal nasal spray vaccine may not be as effective as a seasonal flu shot vaccine in adults, but more data are needed to confirm if one is better than the other. Both the injectable and nasal forms of the H1N1 vaccine are considered to be very effective in preventing H1N1 disease.