

2009 PANDEMIC INFLUENZA VACCINE FACT SHEET



What is Pandemic H1N1Influenza?

Influenza (the flu) is a serious respiratory infection that is caused by a virus. Influenza causes fever, cough headache, muscle soreness, sore throat and stuffy nose. Influenza spreads easily from infected people to others through coughing and sneezing. It can also be picked-up through direct contact with surfaces and objects, like unwashed hands and toys.

Pandemic H1N1 influenza is a new influenza strain that appeared in April 2009. It has since spread around the world. Pandemic H1N1 influenza can infect anyone, although people younger than 60 years of age are more likely to become infected than older individuals. Most people recover fully but a few people can develop serious complications. Those at a somewhat increased risk of complications when they get infected are children less than 5 years of age, people with other medical problems, pregnant women and women who had a baby in the past four weeks, people who are very overweight, Aboriginal people and seniors.

Pandemic H1N1 Influenza Vaccine

Arepanrix™ is an influenza vaccine made specifically to protect against the Pandemic H1N1 influenza strain. It is made exactly like the seasonal influenza vaccine that is produced each year, except for the addition of a “helper substance” called an “adjuvant”. The “adjuvant” is a substance added to the vaccine to “help” the body make good protection (also called an immune response) against Pandemic H1N1 infection. This protection or immune response helps prevent the vaccinated person from getting sick if exposed to the Pandemic H1N1 virus. Using the helper adjuvant means a smaller amount of vaccine can be given with each injection. Based on early studies, Arepanrix™ is expected to be very effective in preventing Pandemic H1N1 infection.

Arepanrix™ will **not** protect against seasonal influenza infection. So, this year you will need both the Pandemic H1N1 and seasonal influenza vaccines to get as much influenza protection as possible.

Pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccination is recommended for anyone six months of age and older who needs or wants protection against Pandemic H1N1 influenza infection. Certain people, who are most at risk for complications from Pandemic H1N1 infection, may be offered the Pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine first.

Children between 6 months and up to an including 9 years of age require two doses of Arepanrix™, given at least 21 days apart.

Arepanrix™ is made exactly like the seasonal influenza vaccine that is produced each year, except for the addition of the helper “adjuvant”. The seasonal influenza vaccine is very safe and serious side effects are very rare, and Arepanrix™ is expected to be just as safe. The adjuvant has been thoroughly studied in about 40,000 people and it has not been shown to cause any serious side effects. It should be noted that no pregnant women or children under the age of 3 years were involved in the studies; however, the vaccine is being used in Europe for these people.

The vaccine does not contain live virus, you cannot get flu from the vaccine.

Minor side effects from Arepanrix™ are expected to include: pain and swelling where the injection is given, tiredness, muscle and joint pain, and headaches. Children may have a mild fever, be tired and irritable and not want to eat. As with the seasonal influenza vaccine, it is expected that most side effects will be mild, will not last long and will go away on their own.

Arepanrix™ has not yet been widely used but is expected to be like the seasonal influenza vaccine where:

- Serious allergic reactions are very rare.
- An illness called Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), which causes muscle paralysis, occurred after the influenza vaccine in 1976 and may occur very uncommonly after the seasonal influenza vaccine in some other influenza seasons.
- During the 2000-2001 influenza season, an “Oculo-Respiratory Syndrome” (ORS) was reported after the seasonal influenza vaccine. ORS began within 24 hours after vaccination and was generally mild; symptoms included red eyes, cough, wheezing, and/or swelling of the face.

DO NOT GET Arepanrix™ Vaccine IF YOU HAVE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING

- Severe allergy reaction to: a previous influenza vaccine;
 - eggs or egg products;
 - thimerosal (a preservative added to the vaccine)
- Infants younger than 6 months of age.
- Pregnant women should receive the Pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine without the adjuvant if this is available. If the vaccine without the adjuvant is not available, they can receive Arepanrix™ if there is a lot of Pandemic H1N1 influenza in the community and they have ongoing medical problems or are more than midway through their pregnancy (over 20 weeks pregnant). Arepanrix™ has not been specifically studied in pregnant women; however, the vaccine is being used in Europe in pregnant women.
- People who are seriously ill with an infection that started recently should wait until they recover before getting Arepanrix™.
- People who have had severe Oculo-Respiratory Syndrome (ORS) after a past influenza vaccine that required them to be in the hospital.
- People with a history of Guillain-Barré Syndrome that developed within 8 weeks of a past influenza vaccine.
- People with bleeding disorders or who are taking medication that could affect blood clotting should discuss their medical situation with the nurse before receiving the vaccine.

Call your doctor if any of these symptoms happen within three days after your vaccination

- Hives
- Swelling of the mouth or throat
- Trouble breathing, hoarseness or wheezing
- Paleness, weakness, dizziness
- Red eyes. Respiratory symptoms (ORS) facial swelling or a combination of these within 24 hours of receiving vaccine and lasting 48 hours

If you have any questions or concerns about influenza immunization, please speak to the nurse

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