



# Health and Safety Committee Newsletter

## GET THE FACTS ABOUT FLU AND STAY HEALTHY....

On September 30<sup>th</sup>, we posted a Health and Safety Newsletter that provided some basic information on the H1N1 Flu virus:

<http://www.spectrumsociety.org/File/SafetyCommitteeSept2009.pdf>

The key points from that newsletter were:

1. Wash your hands – remember excellent universal precautions to keep yourself and others healthy.
2. Stay home when sick. Many of the people you might come in contact with at work or in the community have weakened immune systems and do not need additional exposure to the H1N1 virus.
3. Call HealthLink BC at 8-1-1 any time of the day or night if you have questions about flu.
  - a. For deaf and hearing-impaired assistance (TTY) call 7-1-1.
4. Eat well, get plenty of sleep and exercise to maintain your health and immune system.

### **Know the Difference between a Cold and H1N1 Flu Symptoms:**

<b><u>Symptom</u></b>	<b><u>Cold</u></b>	<b><u>H1N1 Flu</u></b>
<b>Fever</b>	Fever is rare with a cold.	Fever is usually present with the flu in up to 80% of all flu cases. A temperature of 100°F or higher for 3 to 4 days is associated with the H1N1 flu.
<b>Coughing</b>	A hacking, productive (mucus-producing) cough is often present with a cold.	A non-productive (non-mucus producing) cough is usually present with the H1N1 flu (sometimes referred to as dry cough).
<b>Aches</b>	Slight body aches and pains can be part of a cold.	Severe aches and pains are common with the H1N1 flu.
<b>Stuffy Nose</b>	Stuffy nose is commonly present with a cold and typically resolves spontaneously within a week.	Stuffy nose is not commonly present with the H1N1 flu.
<b>Chills</b>	Chills are uncommon with a cold.	60% of people who have the H1N1 flu experience chills.
<b>Tiredness</b>	Tiredness is fairly mild with a cold.	Tiredness is moderate to severe with the H1N1 flu.
<b>Sneezing</b>	Sneezing is commonly present with a cold.	Sneezing is not common with the H1N1 flu.
<b>Sudden Symptoms</b>	Cold symptoms tend to develop over a few days.	The H1N1 flu has a rapid onset within 3-6 hours. The flu hits hard and includes sudden symptoms like high fever, aches and pains.
<b>Headache</b>	A headache is fairly uncommon with a cold.	A headache is very common with the H1N1 flu, present in 80% of flu cases.
<b>Sore Throat</b>	Sore throat is commonly present with a cold.	Sore throat is not commonly present with the H1N1 flu.
<b>Chest Discomfort</b>	Chest discomfort is mild to moderate with a cold.	Chest discomfort is often severe with the H1N1 flu.

On the next two pages are a press release from the Province of BC on access to vaccines:

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2009HLS0028-000514  
October 21, 2009

Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport  
BC Centre for Disease Control

### **H1N1 PANDEMIC VACCINE APPROVED, TIMING CONFIRMED**

VICTORIA – Following today’s approval by Health Canada regulators, the pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine will be made available to British Columbians beginning the week of Oct. 26, announced Minister of Healthy Living and Sport Ida Chong and Provincial Health Officer Dr. Perry Kendall.

“Now that the H1N1 flu vaccine has been approved, I encourage British Columbians to get immunized and protect themselves against this novel flu virus,” said Kendall. “Even if some of the population has already contracted H1N1 so far, we know that most British Columbians have not been infected yet and can still benefit from receiving the vaccine to protect themselves.”

The first batch of vaccine has arrived in British Columbia and is currently being distributed around the province to regional health authorities, based on population numbers in each region. Beginning Monday, it will be available first to those people who would benefit most from immunization: individuals under 65 years of age with chronic disease, pregnant women and individuals – including First Nations people – living in remote or isolated communities. These groups are at high-risk for suffering complications from pandemic H1N1 infection.

“B.C. will receive the H1N1 vaccine shipments in phases. Our plan is to first immunize those individuals considered to be at most risk to ensure that more vulnerable groups are protected,” said Chong. “During this time, we would ask that those people who are not at highest risk to wait until mid-November to get immunized when we receive our full orders.”

The pandemic H1N1 vaccine is an adjuvanted vaccine. Adjuvants are compounds that boost the immune system’s response to vaccine, allowing smaller doses to be used per person. A version of the H1N1 vaccine without adjuvant will also be available in B.C. beginning the second week of November. While the unadjuvanted H1N1 vaccine is recommended for pregnant women, the adjuvanted version, available early next week, is approved for everyone who wants to protect themselves from this pandemic.

Once clinics begin next week, British Columbians who fall into the high-risk groups listed above who need and want the H1N1 vaccine, and for whom the seasonal flu shot is also recommended, will be able to receive both at the same time.

“The national expert committees that are providing guidance on the use of the pandemic vaccines have recommended that giving seasonal and pandemic vaccines together is not expected to affect the immune response to either one. This is in keeping with what we know about almost all other vaccines.” said Dr. Monika Naus, director of immunization at the BC Centre for Disease Control, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority. “By getting the seasonal and pandemic vaccines together, the risk from both sorts of influenza can be reduced at the same time.”

When B.C.’s seasonal influenza campaign launched in mid-October, the seasonal flu shot was only recommended for seniors and those living in long-term care facilities.

“While I can understand there may be some confusion in the public about how and when to get vaccinated, and with which vaccine, this decision to offer the H1N1 and seasonal vaccines together addresses these concerns,” said Kendall. “B.C.’s initial recommendation to delay the seasonal vaccine campaign for everyone under the age of 65 was made using the best available evidence and before the pandemic vaccine was available. Now that pandemic vaccine is here, we can give protection against both seasonal and pandemic viruses at the same time”

For more information on the H1N1 flu vaccine, visit [www.gov.bc.ca/h1n1](http://www.gov.bc.ca/h1n1). To find where you can get your H1N1 and/or seasonal flu shot, visit the Flu Clinic Locator at [www.ImmunizeBC.ca](http://www.ImmunizeBC.ca) or contact your local public health unit. More locations will be added as they are confirmed.