



This year it's a different flu season.

H1N1 Breastfeeding Question and Answer Information Sheet

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I am breastfeeding. Can I still get the H1N1 flu shot?

Yes, women who are breastfeeding should receive the adjuvanted H1N1 flu vaccine to protect their health and the health of their infant.

What type of H1N1 flu shot should I get if I am breastfeeding?

Breastfeeding women should receive the adjuvanted H1N1 flu shot. An “adjuvant” is added to vaccines so that less of the active ingredient (i.e. antigen) is required to boost the body’s response to vaccine. The adjuvant in the H1N1 flu shot is made up of natural ingredients such as fish oil, water and vitamin E.

Do I need one or two doses of the H1N1 flu shot?

All persons over the age of 10 years will need only one dose of the H1N1 flu shot.

The following chart details the number of doses recommended for children between 6 months and 9 years of age. There are differences based on the age and health status of the child. Children under 6 months of age can not get the H1N1 flu shot.

Age of Child	Number of Doses
Age 6 months to less than 3 years	2 half-doses of adjuvanted vaccine. There should be a minimum of 21 days between the 2 half-doses.
Age 3 to 9 years— <i>Healthy children</i>	1 half-dose adjuvanted vaccine, for now*
Age 3 to 9 years— <i>Children with chronic medical conditions**</i>	2 half-doses of adjuvanted vaccine There should be a minimum of 21 days between the 2 half-doses.

* These recommendations may be updated as more information becomes available.

** Chronic medical conditions are defined as conditions “significant enough to require regular medical-follow-up.” Includes conditions such as:

- cardiac or pulmonary disorders (including bronchopulmonary dysplasia, cystic fibrosis and asthma)
- diabetes mellitus and other metabolic diseases
- cancer, immunodeficiency, immunosuppression (due to underlying disease and/or therapy)
- renal disease
- anaemia or hemoglobinopathy
- conditions that compromise the management of respiratory secretions and are associated with an increased risk of aspiration
- children and adolescents with conditions treated for long periods with acetylsalicylic acid



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Do I need to get the seasonal flu shot too?

At this time, the seasonal flu shot is being recommended to persons aged 65 years or older. This is because people aged 65 years and older are at much higher risk of serious illness from seasonal flu.

Public Health clinics for the seasonal flu shot will be held once the H1N1 flu shot clinics are completed (in December 2009).

Can my baby get the H1N1 flu shot?

If your baby is less than 6 months of age, he or she can not get the H1N1 flu shot.

For more information on the H1N1 vaccine, please refer to the **H1N1 Flu Vaccine Question and Answer Information Sheet**.

Can I continue to breastfeed if I have symptoms of influenza?

Breastfeeding is the best way to protect your baby from all illnesses because of the antibodies passed from mother to child. Women who become ill can safely continue to breastfeed their babies. While it isn't known if the flu virus can be passed through breast milk, the benefits of the antibodies in breast milk means that it continues to be the best way to keep your baby healthy.

Can I continue to breastfeed if my baby has symptoms of influenza?

It is recommended that you continue to breastfeed your baby and speak to your baby's doctor. You may need to breastfeed more often when your baby is ill.

Can I still breastfeed if I am taking anti-viral medication (Tamiflu) for influenza?

Women can safely take antiviral medications (Tamiflu) while breastfeeding—only low amounts of antiviral medication are passed through breast milk. Breastfeeding is the best way to protect your baby from all illnesses because of the antibodies passed from mother to child.

How can I protect my baby from the H1N1 flu?

Even though your baby can not be vaccinated against the H1N1 flu virus, there are many ways you can protect him or her:

- All caregivers and household contacts should be vaccinated with the H1N1 flu vaccine.
- Cough and sneeze in your arm, not your hand.
- Know the symptoms of the flu.
- If you have given birth within the last 4 weeks and you develop symptoms of the flu, speak to your doctor as soon as you develop symptoms (fever and cough and one or more of the following: sore throat, muscle pain, joint pain or extreme exhaustion)—your physician may prescribe a medication called an antiviral (Tamiflu) for you, which needs to be administered within 48 hours of symptom onset.
- If you get sick, stay home.
- Protect your baby by avoiding places or events where your baby may be exposed to coughs, sneezes or touches from strangers or others that may be ill.
- Keep common surfaces and items clean and disinfected.
- Stay healthy by eating healthy foods and keeping active.



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Who can I contact for more information?

Individuals with questions about the H1N1 flu virus can contact Region of Waterloo Public Health's general information line at **519-883-2289**.

For a listing of upcoming immunization clinics, please contact Region of Waterloo Public Health's automated phone line at **519-883-2324**.

Public Health's pandemic website—**www.waterlooregionpandemic.ca**—includes information on how individuals can protect themselves and their families, caring for sick people, and other frequently asked questions about the H1N1 flu virus.

The Ontario Ministry of Health website has an on-line self-assessment tool to help people decide what to do if they think they may have the flu. This can be found at: **www.ontario.ca/flu**—*click on the "Flu Self-Assessment Tool" tab on the left-hand side.*