

**ARE YOU PREGNANT? HAVE YOU
GIVEN BIRTH IN THE LAST 6 WEEKS?**



**IT
STOPS
FOR
YOU**




Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive


Department of
Health & Children
AN ROINN SLÁNTE AGUS LEANAI

Getting the Swine Flu vaccine
will protect you from Swine Flu
and will also stop it spreading
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Swine Flu is a new flu virus that, for most people, has caused mild to moderate illness. However, some people, including pregnant women, have been hit harder by this flu, and some have died. Most people have no immunity to the Swine Flu virus so, over the coming months, the HSE intends to offer a Swine Flu vaccine to everyone in Ireland.

Who will get the vaccine first?

Everyone will be offered the Swine Flu vaccine, but we are giving the first supplies to those who are more at risk from Swine Flu. Healthcare workers will also be vaccinated to protect themselves and their patients.

Who is most at risk?

The people most at risk and being vaccinated first include:

- All pregnant women from 14 weeks pregnant to 6 weeks after giving birth
- Pregnant women under 14 weeks pregnant who also have one of these conditions:
 - Long-term Lung Disease (like Asthma and Cystic Fibrosis)
 - Long-term Heart Disease
 - Long-term Kidney Disease
 - Long-term Liver Disease
 - Long-term Neurological Disease (like MS, Cerebral Palsy)
 - Immunosuppression e.g. cancer treatment (and their household contacts)
 - Haemoglobinopathies
 - Diabetes
 - Morbid Obesity (check with your GP)



Why should pregnant women get the Swine Flu vaccine?

Pregnant women are at higher risk of complications from Swine Flu, including early labour or severe pneumonia. The risk of these complications is higher after 14 weeks into the pregnancy and is greater for those pregnant women with at-risk medical conditions. The vaccine will prevent pregnant women from getting this flu.

Will vaccinating a mother during pregnancy protect her baby?

Vaccination during pregnancy may protect the baby and also helps prevent the mother getting flu and passing it on to her baby.

Is it safe for pregnant women to be vaccinated?

Yes. Like seasonal flu vaccines, which have been used for more than 60 years, the Swine Flu vaccine is safe to use in pregnancy. The vaccines are fully licensed, serious side effects are expected to be very rare and the Swine Flu vaccine cannot give you Swine Flu. You can read more about vaccine safety on swineflu.ie.

Is the vaccine safe if I'm breastfeeding?

Yes the vaccine is safe for breastfeeding mothers and their babies.

What is Thiomersal and is it safe?

Thiomersal is an ingredient in the Swine Flu vaccine and, yes, it is safe. It is used to stop vaccines becoming contaminated. It is a mercury based preservative which has been used in medical products and vaccines for more than 60 years.

Is there anyone who cannot get Swine Flu vaccine?

Vaccine should not be given to children under 6 months of age, and should be postponed if you have a temperature over 38°C. Everyone in the at-risk groups aged over 6 months and under 65 years should get the vaccine – unless they have a severe allergy to eggs or other substances in the vaccine or have previously had Guillain Barré Syndrome. You can read more about vaccine safety on swineflu.ie. If you have any concerns you can discuss them with your GP or Maternity Hospital.



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How long does it take the vaccine to work?

The vaccine starts to work within two weeks – our current advice is that for you to be fully protected from Swine Flu you need a second dose of vaccine three weeks after the first dose. It is hoped that more information will emerge confirming that one dose of vaccine will be enough to protect people aged 13 years and over.

What can I expect after vaccination?

The most common side effects will be mild and may include soreness, redness or swelling where the injection was given. Headache, fever, aches and tiredness may occur. Some people may have mild sweating and shivering as their immune system responds to the vaccine, but this is not Swine Flu and will pass after a day or so.

What if I don't feel well after vaccination?

If you have a temperature after the vaccine, take paracetamol, as it is safe in pregnancy, and it's important for you and your baby to avoid fever. Do not take ibuprofen or aspirin (unless advised by your obstetrician). Remember if you are unwell after getting a vaccine, it could be for some other reason – don't assume it's the flu vaccine and take medical advice if needed.

Do I have to pay for the vaccine?

The vaccine and its administration are free of charge for everyone. You may be asked for your PPSN (Personal Public Service Number) when you go to have your vaccine.

Talk to your GP or Maternity Hospital and make an appointment for a Swine Flu Vaccine now.



Where can I get more information?

Visit www.swineflu.ie or call **1800 94 11 00**

