

**PREGNANT? ASTHMA? HEART DISEASE?
CANCER? OBESITY? DIABETES?
LONG-TERM ILLNESS?**



IT STOPS FOR YOU




Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

 Department of
Health & Children
AN ROINN SLÁINTE 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 children, pregnant women and people with long-term illnesses have been hit harder by this flu, and some have died. Most people have no immunity to Swine Flu so, over the coming months, the HSE intends to offer a Swine Flu vaccine to everyone living 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 from Swine Flu?

- Pregnant women – from 14 weeks pregnant to 6 weeks after giving birth and
- Anyone aged over 6 months and under 65 years who has:
 - 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)

People aged 65 and over seem to have some immunity to Swine Flu, so are not in the most At-Risk Group.





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How does the Swine Flu vaccine work?

The vaccine helps your immune system to produce antibodies to the Swine Flu virus. When a person who has been vaccinated comes into contact with Swine Flu these antibodies attack the virus and prevent you getting the flu.

How safe is the Swine Flu vaccine?

We expect the Swine Flu vaccine to be as safe as the usual seasonal flu vaccine, which has been used for more than 60 years. Serious side effects are expected to be very rare and the Swine Flu vaccine cannot give you Swine Flu. The vaccines are fully licensed and clinically tested. You can read more about vaccine safety on swineflu.ie.

Is it safe for pregnant women to be vaccinated?

Yes. The vaccine is safe to use in pregnancy and is recommended for all women from 14 weeks pregnant to 6 weeks after giving birth. Pregnant women under 14 weeks pregnant who have an existing at-risk medical condition are also advised to get the vaccine.

Is there anyone who cannot get Swine Flu vaccine?

The 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. If you have any concerns you can discuss these with your GP.

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.

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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?

Take paracetamol or ibuprofen if you have a fever or any pain where the injection was given. If you are pregnant, take paracetamol for fever, not ibuprofen or aspirin. Avoid clothes rubbing against the injection area and drink plenty of fluids. Remember if you or a child is unwell after getting a vaccine, they could be sick 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 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**