



**Central Michigan District Health Department**  
**“Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities”**

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[www.cmdhd.org](http://www.cmdhd.org)

## H1N1 Nasal Vaccine Safety

### Who can get the nasal spray?

- **The spray is recommended for use in healthy people 2-49 years of age who are not pregnant.**
- Seasonal nasal spray vaccine has been used safely in these groups since 2003.

### Who should not use nasal spray?

- Children younger than 2 years of age;
- Pregnant women;
- People 50 years of age and older;
- People with chronic health problems such as heart or lung disease, asthma, diabetes, kidney failure or weakened immune systems;
- Children younger than 5 years old who have had recurring wheezing;
- Children or adolescents receiving aspirin therapy;
- People who have had Guillain-Barre syndrome, a rare nervous system disorder;
- People who have severe allergy to chicken, eggs, or any other components in the spray;
- Anyone in close contact with a person with a *severely* weakened immune system.

### Is the nasal spray effective?

- Both the shot and the nasal spray should be equally effective against 2009 H1N1 flu.
- Some reports have indicated the nasal spray works well because it starts in the nose where flu infection normally begins.
- Since there is no natural immunity to the new 2009 H1N1 virus, either type of vaccine will provide some protection.

### Since the spray contains live viruses, can't it cause the flu?

- The nasal spray does contain live viruses, however the viruses are weakened (attenuated).
- The weakened viruses cannot grow at normal body temperature and cannot cause the flu.
- The weakened viruses do not change into typical flu viruses that can be passed on to others.

### Can pregnant women be around someone who's had nasal spray?

- The nasal spray is not recommended for pregnant women themselves due to a lack of studies in the group of people.
- There is no risk to pregnant women who are in close contact with someone receiving the nasal spray.

### What about new or breastfeeding mothers?

- Both new and breastfeeding mothers can get the nasal spray anytime after their babies are born.
- When new parents are vaccinated, it helps protect their babies because infants less than 6 months old cannot get the flu vaccine.

### What about health care workers?

- Nasal spray vaccine can be safely given to health care personnel who are healthy, younger than 50 years old and not pregnant.
- Anyone who works with patients needing special care due to severe immune suppression should not get nasal vaccine.

*This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used as a substitute for talking with a health care provider. If you have questions about influenza, please talk with your provider.*