

# UNADJUVANTED H1N1 VACCINE INFORMATION SHEET

## PANDEMIC H1N1 INFLUENZA VACCINE (CANADIAN WITHOUT ADJUVANT)

November 18, 2009

**Be sure to read this entire sheet thoroughly before receiving the unadjuvanted Pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine.**

### **What is influenza and Pandemic H1N1 influenza?**

Influenza (commonly known as "the flu") is a respiratory infection that is caused by a virus. People with influenza quickly become ill with a cough, fever, chills, sore throat, headache, muscle aches and tiredness. Most people are sick for 2 to 7 days, although the cough may last for weeks. In a few people, influenza can lead to pneumonia, hospitalization and even death. Influenza spreads easily from infected people to others through coughing and sneezing. It can also be picked-up through direct contact with surfaces and objects, like unwashed hands and toys.

Pandemic H1N1 influenza is a new influenza strain that emerged in April 2009. It has since spread around the world. Pandemic H1N1 influenza can infect anyone, although people younger than 60 years of age are more likely to become infected than older individuals. Most people recover uneventfully but a few people can develop serious complications. Those at a somewhat increased risk of complications when they get infected are children less than 5 years of age, people with other medical problems, pregnant women and women who had a baby in the past six weeks, people who are very overweight, Aboriginal people and seniors.

### **How does the unadjuvanted Pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine work?**

The unadjuvanted H1N1 influenza vaccine is made specifically to protect against the Pandemic H1N1 influenza strain. It is made exactly like the seasonal influenza vaccine that is produced each year. This protection or immune response made to the vaccine helps prevent the vaccinated person from getting sick if exposed to the Pandemic H1N1 virus. Based on early studies, the unadjuvanted H1N1 influenza vaccine is expected to be very effective in preventing Pandemic H1N1 infection in healthy adults 10 to 64 years of age.

The Pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine will **not** protect against seasonal influenza infection. So, this year you will need both the Pandemic H1N1 and seasonal influenza vaccines to get as much influenza protection as possible.

### **Who should get the unadjuvanted Pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine and how many doses do they need?**

The unadjuvanted Pandemic H1N1 influenza is being offered to adults from 10 to 64 years of age with normal immune systems and to pregnant women. Only one dose is needed.

### **What are the risks from the unadjuvanted Pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine?**

The unadjuvanted Pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine is made exactly like the seasonal influenza vaccine that is produced each year. The seasonal influenza vaccine is very safe and serious side effects are very rare.

Because the influenza vaccine does not contain live virus, you cannot get flu from the vaccine. Minor side effects are expected to include: pain and swelling where the injection is given, tiredness, fever, muscle and joint pain, and headaches. As with the seasonal influenza vaccine, it is expected that most side effects will be mild, not last long and go away on their own.

The unadjuvanted H1N1 influenza vaccine is expected to be like the seasonal influenza vaccine where:

- Serious allergic reactions are very rare.
- An illness called Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), which causes muscle paralysis, occurred after the influenza vaccine in 1976 and may occur very uncommonly after the seasonal influenza vaccine in some other influenza seasons.
- During the 2000-2001 influenza season, an "Oculo-Respiratory Syndrome" (ORS) was reported after the seasonal influenza vaccine. ORS began within 24 hours after vaccination and was generally mild. Symptoms included red eyes, coughing, wheezing, and/or swelling of the face. Some of these symptoms may be noted after the influenza vaccine.

## Who should not get the unadjuvanted Pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine?

- Anyone who is seriously allergic to:
    - a previous influenza vaccine;
    - eggs or egg products;
    - thimerosal (a form of mercury found in other vaccines and contact lens solution).People who developed hives, swelling of the mouth or throat, or trouble breathing after a previous influenza vaccine, after eating eggs or egg products, or after receiving thimerosal should not be vaccinated. They should consult with their doctor and consider seeing an allergist.
  - Tell the nurse or doctor if you have ever had an allergic reaction to any vaccine in the past.
  - Children less than 10 years of age, seniors 65 years of age and over, and anyone with a weakened immune system should not receive this vaccine. Arepanrix™ is the recommended vaccine for these groups.
  - People who are seriously ill with an infection that started recently should wait until they recover before getting the unadjuvanted Pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine.
  - People who have had severe Oculo-Respiratory Syndrome (ORS) after a past influenza vaccine that required them to be in the hospital.
  - People with a history of Guillain-Barré Syndrome that developed within 8 weeks of a past influenza vaccine.
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- People with bleeding disorders or who are taking medication that could affect blood clotting should discuss their medical situation with the nurse before receiving the vaccine.

### Some general information about being vaccinated:

- Wearing a short sleeve shirt makes it easier for you to get your vaccine.
- You will be asked to wait in the clinic area for at least 15 minutes after the needle is given.
- The unadjuvanted Pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine will not prevent seasonal influenza so you will want to get your seasonal influenza vaccine as well for complete influenza protection.
- Older children / adolescents can consent to their own vaccinations if they are able to understand the benefits and risks of receiving and not receiving the vaccine.
- There is no cost for the vaccination.

**Be sure to read this entire sheet thoroughly before receiving the unadjuvanted Pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine. If you have any questions about influenza or the unadjuvanted Pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine, please discuss them with the nurse before receiving your vaccine.**