

# Flu Prevention & Asthma

## Have asthma? Should you get vaccinated for flu?



The best way to prevent flu is to get vaccinated. Because the flu virus changes, it is important to get newly vaccinated every year. This season is unique because you could be exposed to two different viruses: the **seasonal flu** and the completely new **H1N1 (“Swine”) flu**. This 2009 H1N1 flu is very contagious and expected to infect even more people than the usual seasonal flu.

### **If you have asthma:**

Getting vaccinated is especially important if you have asthma because you are more likely to experience serious complications if you do get flu.

Both the seasonal flu and H1N1 flu vaccines come in two forms: injection (“flu shot”), and nasal spray. People with chronic respiratory conditions such as asthma are advised to receive the injection because the nasal spray can trigger asthma symptoms.

### **Why you should get two vaccines:**

While H1N1 flu symptoms are similar to seasonal flu, the viruses are different, and you need to receive **both vaccines** to prevent infection. It is safe to get both vaccines at the same time (one in each arm). The H1N1 vaccine is simply a “recipe change” from the seasonal flu vaccine, and both vaccines contain inactive flu virus, so you cannot get the flu from the vaccinations.

### **If you have food allergies:**

All the seasonal flu and H1N1 flu vaccines in the United States contain chicken egg cells. If you are allergic to egg, you should not receive the seasonal flu and H1N1 flu vaccines this year. However, you should **talk to your doctor** about any special arrangements that could make vaccination possible for you. If you might be allergic to any other vaccine ingredients, ask your doctor to check the ingredients listed in the package insert.

**Be sure your asthma is under control and talk to your doctor about any concerns you have about the flu.**



**For more information, contact AAFA New England:**

109 Highland Ave, Needham, MA 02494

(781)-444-7778, [www.asthmaandallergies.org](http://www.asthmaandallergies.org)

Toll free: 1-877-2-ASTHMA