

# H1N1 Updates from TRICARE

OCT. 16, 2009

## Key Messages:

- The Defense Department's mission during H1N1 or any influenza pandemic is to preserve combat capabilities and readiness, prevent infections, save lives, and reduce human suffering for all service members, their families and civilians.
- The seasonal flu is different from the H1N1 flu because H1N1 is a new influenza virus that people have not been exposed to before, so as a result their chances of catching the virus are greater.
- Active Duty, National Guard, and Reserves will be immunized through DoD's 2009 H1N1 vaccine allocations by priority based on operational needs and/or health risks according to DoD guidance.
- TRICARE has suspended referral and authorization requirements for TRICARE Prime beneficiaries, allowing them to receive the H1N1 vaccine from any TRICARE-authorized provider without a referral from their primary care manager. This is in effect from October 1, 2009 to April 30, 2010, for H1N1 only.
- The Department of Defense will continue to work closely with our interagency and host-nation counterparts worldwide to monitor and screen military personnel.

## Other Messages:

- Those military personnel who are subject to the highest rates of transmission will be vaccinated first. These include, those deployed and in large training locations, personnel aboard ships and health care workers.
- Family members and retirees who are enrolled for care at MTFs outside the continental United States (excluding Hawaii and Alaska) will receive vaccine via a direct allocation to DoD from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. MTFs in Alaska and Hawaii are included in the continental United States distribution plan.
- Based on preliminary data from adults participating in multiple clinical studies, the 2009 H1N1 vaccines induces a robust immune response in most healthy adults eight to 10 days after a single dose.

# H1N1 Updates from TRICARE

OCT. 16, 2009

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention expect the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine to have a similar safety profile as seasonal flu vaccines, which have a very good safety track record. Over the years, hundreds of millions of Americans have received seasonal flu vaccines. People who have a severe (life-threatening) allergy to chicken eggs or to any other substance in the vaccine should not be vaccinated.
- Potential side effects of the H1N1 vaccines are expected to be similar to those of seasonal flu vaccines. For the injected vaccine, the most common side effect is soreness at the injection site. Other side effects may include mild fever, body aches, and fatigue for a few days after the inoculation. For the nasal spray vaccine, the most common side effects include runny nose or nasal congestion for all ages, sore throats in adults, and – in children 2 to 6 years old – fever.
- To prevent the spread of infection, people should take the following actions:
  - Wash hands with soap and warm or hot water; cold water is not as effective for killing germs.
  - If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
  - Cover your nose or mouth when you cough or sneeze.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
  - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - Those with flu-like symptoms should stay home from work, school or social gatherings.