

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and Talking Points About Flu and Flu Shots

(last updated 3/11/10)

Members with specific questions or concerns about the flu or flu shots should call the primary care doctor. SCAN OnCall® nurses are also available toll-free 24 hours a day at 1-800-793-1717.

Question	Seasonal Flu Answer	H1N1 Flu Answer
<p>1. Does SCAN recommend flu shots for its members?</p>	<p>Yes. SCAN strongly recommends you get a seasonal flu shot. We follow the recommendation of the best medical experts: the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Getting the seasonal flu shot every year is very important for people over age 50. Older adults are more likely to have complications from flu -- like pneumonia and even death. In the US, seasonal flu is related to more than 35,000 deaths and more than 200,000 hospitalizations every year. Most victims of seasonal flu are older adults and people with chronic health problems.</p> <p>If you have questions about getting a seasonal flu shot, talk to your doctor.</p>	<p>We follow the recommendation of the best medical experts: the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention who say that people 25 through 64 years of age who are at higher risk for complications because of chronic health conditions or immune system problems are a priority group for H1N1 shots.</p> <p>The H1N1 shot is now widely available in California and we encourage all SCAN members to get it.</p> <p>If you have questions about getting an H1N1 flu shot, talk to your doctor.</p> <p>(See also Question #20 for more info about who should get H1N1 shots.)</p>

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2. Is the flu shot a covered benefit?	Yes. A seasonal flu shot is a covered benefit when you get it from your assigned SCAN doctor or Medical Group.	Yes.
3. Is the live, intranasal influenza vaccine (aka LAIV or “FluMist” nasal spray) a covered benefit?	No. The nasal spray (LAIV) seasonal flu vaccine is only approved for use in healthy people 2-49 years of age.	No. The nasal spray (LAIV) H1N1 vaccine is only approved for use in healthy people 2-49 years of age.
4. Is there a vaccine shortage?	No. So far this year, more people than usual have gotten their seasonal flu shot. Some doctors have used up their first batch of flu shots. There is no vaccine shortage. New batches of seasonal flu shots arrived at the end of December and are still available. But don't worry. Seasonal flu usually peaks in February and March. Getting the shot now will still protect you.	No. H1N1 shots are being made and distributed every week. Demand for the H1N1 vaccine has slowed and supply is high.
5. Is there a co-payment for the flu shot?	There is no co-payment if you go to the doctor's office just for the seasonal flu shot. However, if you get your seasonal flu shot during a doctor's appointment you will have to pay the regular office visit co-payment. That	No. Some places may charge an “administration fee” for the H1N1 shot. SCAN members are not subject to this fee when you get the shot from your primary care doctor or medical group. If your doctor or medical group does

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	co-payment is for the office visit, not for the seasonal flu shot.	not have the H1N1 shots they may direct you to another provider with whom they have made arrangements for payment. Some doctors and medical groups may set up a system to reimburse members who get the H1N1 shot from another source. Be sure to get information about this before you go get an H1N1 shot in the community.
<p>6. Will SCAN pay for a flu shot I get in the community?</p>	<p>No. SCAN only covers seasonal flu shots from your SCAN doctor or Medical Group. We do not pay for seasonal flu shots from local pharmacies, senior centers, health departments or other public seasonal flu clinics. SCAN does not offer reimbursement if you use a non-SCAN provider. Non-SCAN providers cannot bill SCAN for your seasonal flu shot either. The exception may be if your doctor runs out of shots and directs you to another provider with whom they have made arrangements for payment. Some doctors and medical groups may set up a system to reimburse members who get their seasonal flu shots from another source but you should get information about this prior to seeking a seasonal flu shot in the community.</p>	<p>No. The government bought all of the H1N1 shots and supplies. They are free to providers and other organizations (health departments, pharmacies, etc.) who will give the shots to people in the priority groups. Some may want to charge an “administration fee” but you should be able to get reimbursed. (see #5)</p>
<p>7. Will Medicare pay for a flu</p>	<p>No. When you joined SCAN you agreed to use SCAN providers for</p>	<p>No. The government is buying all of the H1N1 shots and supplies and will</p>

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shot?	Medicare covered benefits like seasonal flu shots. Non-SCAN providers cannot bill Medicare for your seasonal flu shot.	distribute them to providers and other organizations (health departments, pharmacies, etc.) who will give the shots to people in the priority groups.
8. I got a flu shot last year – do I need it again?	Yes. Every year different types of seasonal flu go around. The seasonal flu shot combats the most common ones for this year, which are different than last year. For the best protection, you need a seasonal flu shot every year.	Any flu shots you got in the past do not protect against H1N1 flu. A new shot for the H1N1 flu has been developed and tested. If you meet the criteria for one of the H1N1 priority groups you should get it as soon as possible. If you have questions about getting an H1N1 flu shot, talk to your doctor.
9. Why should I get a flu shot if it does not protect me from all types of flu?	The seasonal flu shot will not be a perfect match for all types of seasonal flu (there are hundreds), but it will protect you from the most common ones for this year. In addition, research shows that even when you get a type of flu that was not in the shot, you are less likely to have severe complications. Some protection is always better than none!	Get the shot because it is the best way to protect yourself from illness and death from this new type of flu. If you have questions about getting an H1N1 flu shot, talk to your doctor.
10. Do flu shots make you sick? Can I get the flu from the shot?	No. Seasonal flu shots are made from inactive (killed) viruses and cannot give you the flu.	No. The H1N1 flu shots are being made the same way that season flu shots are made - with inactive (killed) viruses that cannot give you the flu.
11. Is the flu really that serious? Do I really need a shot?	Yes. A seasonal flu episode itself may not seem so bad, but it weakens your body's ability to fight other infections	Yes, if you are in one of the priority groups you are at highest risk for serious flu complications, including

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	that could be very serious. Flu is the most common cause of death from a preventable disease. Every year thousands of people go to the hospital for seasonal flu. Some even die because of flu. Many of these are older adults.	death. (See answer to Question #20) The H1N1 shot is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from illness and death. If you have questions about getting an H1N1 flu shot, talk to your doctor.
12. I am healthy so why do I need a flu shot? I never get sick, so why should I bother?	Healthy people need the seasonal flu shot to stay healthy. Without the seasonal flu shot healthy people can get the virus and pass it along to elders and children who could get sick and end up in the hospital.	H1N1 flu is infecting and killing a large number of people who were otherwise healthy. Also, without the H1N1 flu shot healthy people can get H1N1 and pass it along to others who could get sick and could have serious complications.
13. How many flu shots do I need?	One every year. Talk to your doctor if you have questions.	People over 10 years old only need one H1N1 shot to get the full protection. Children between age 6 months and 10 years will need two shots about one month apart to get the full protection. The novel H1N1 vaccine is not intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccine – it is intended to be used along-side seasonal flu vaccine.
14. When should I get a flu shot?	Seasonal flu typically peaks in January and February, so we encourage you to get your seasonal flu shot anytime between September and February.	As soon as you can,
15. When is my doctor or Medical Group giving flu shots?	Call your doctor's office to find out when and where to get your seasonal flu shot.	If your doctor or Medical Group ordered H1N1 vaccine they may have it now or will be getting it soon. Not all

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	[SCAN staff can check Medical Group flu clinic list at S:\Flu\2009 Flu clinics]	doctors will have the H1N1 shots available. Call your doctor's office to find out the plan for the H1N1 shot.
16. Can I use SCAN transportation to go get my flu shot?	Yes, if you have the Legacy or Classic Plan and you have not used up your rides for the year. To ask for a ride call 1-866-779-0560. Call at least 24 hours before you plan to go. If you need a wheelchair van, call 48 hours before.	Yes, if you have the Legacy or Classic Plan and you have not used up your rides for the year. To ask for a ride call 1-866-779-0560. Call at least 24 hours before you plan to go. If you need a wheelchair van, call 48 hours before.
17. Why does SCAN strongly recommend flu shots for caregivers?	Without the seasonal flu shot healthy people can still get the virus, not suffer the effects, yet pass it along to elders and children who are more likely to get sick. In addition, members whose caregivers who fall ill from seasonal flu often go without needed assistance when their caregiver is sick. The CDC recommends that all persons who live with or care for persons at high risk for influenza-related complications should receive the seasonal flu shot every year. Caregivers are encouraged to get the seasonal flu shot from their own doctor, or seek a low cost shot in the community.	The CDC does not identify household contacts and caregivers of adults as a priority for H1N1 vaccination. However, the CDC does recommend that healthcare and emergency medical services personnel receive the novel H1N1 vaccine when it first becomes available. Caregivers who meet the priority criteria for H1N1 should get the H1N1 flu shot from their own doctor, or seek a public clinic in the community.
18. Will SCAN give flu shots or flu shot vouchers/coupons to members and/or caregivers of SCAN members?	No.	No.

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<p>19. Where can I get more information about flu and flu shots?</p>	<p>www.scanhealthplan.com/fluinfo www.scanhealthplan.com/flu Also, check your Healthwise for Life book and look for information in our Fall member newsletters. You may also call our Member Services Department at 800-559-3500.</p>	<p>www.scanhealthplan.com/fluinfo www.scanhealthplan.com/H1N1 Also, look for information in our member newsletters. You may also call our Member Services Department at 800-559-3500.</p>
<p>20. Who does the Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommend get flu shots?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all children aged 6 months to 18 years, • all persons aged ≥50 years, and other adults at risk for medical complications from flu, • all persons who live with or care for persons at high risk for flu-related complications, including contacts of children aged <6 months • women who will be pregnant during flu season • people with chronic lung, heart, kidney, liver, nerve, blood or metabolic illnesses (includes diabetes) • people who have immune system problems, like HIV • residents of nursing homes and other long-term facilities 	<p>Anyone who wants one, but especially:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pregnant women, • people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age, • health care and emergency medical services personnel, • persons between the ages of 6 months through 24 years of age, and • people from ages 25 through 64 years who are at higher risk for novel H1N1 because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems.
<p>21. Who should not get a flu shot?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with a severe allergy to egg or another part of the shot • Someone who had a severe reaction to a past flu shot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with a severe allergy to egg or another part of the shot • Someone who had a severe reaction to a past flu shot

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	Talk to your doctor if you have questions.	Talk to your doctor if you have questions.
22. Is the flu shot safe?	Yes. Millions of people get a seasonal shot each year with the worst effects being soreness in the arm where the shot was given. For older adults and others who have a high risk of complications and death from seasonal flu, the risks of not getting the shot are worse than the risks posed by the shot.	Yes. The H1N1 shot is made the same way as the seasonal flu shot and is just as safe and effective. So far more than 110 million people have been vaccinated for H1N1 and fewer than 1 in a million reported a problem.
23. I already had the flu, so do I still need a flu shot.	Yes. There are multiple types of flu viruses that go around every year. The flu shot will protect you from three different viruses that you may not have been exposed to yet. Having a seasonal flu does not protect you from H1N1 either.	Unless your case of flu was officially confirmed by a lab test as H1N1 2009, there is no way to be sure you are protected. If you did have confirmed H1N1, you could still get seasonal flu and should seek a seasonal flu shot.

If you have additional questions about flu shots, please call Member Services.

1-800-559-3500, 7:00 a.m.– 8:00 p.m, 7 Days a Week.

TTY: Users: 1-800-735-2929

Or contact us online [click here](#).