



Vaccination against New Flu ("Swine Flu")

www.neuegrippe.bund.de

The best protection against New Flu ("swine flu") is early vaccination

Vaccination is the most effective and safest protection against infectious diseases such as tetanus, diphtheria and polio. For years vaccination has been carried out against seasonal flu. A vaccine against the New Flu virus has now been developed. Read this leaflet for the most important information about vaccination against New Flu.

What is New Flu?

New Flu – also known as swine flu or New Influenza – is triggered by the pandemic influenza virus A (H1N1). This is a new variant of the flu virus that contains genetic segments of influenza viruses from birds, pigs and humans. The virus is easily transmitted from person to person. Since it is a new type, most people have not yet been able to develop effective defences against it. Throughout the world very many people are contracting the disease. One therefore speaks of a pandemic.

Contagion takes place from person to person, primarily through droplet infection; that is, the viruses are directly transmitted through sneezing, coughing or kissing. Viruses can also be transmitted from hand to hand - for example, after sneezing - or reach the mucous membranes of the mouth and nose by hand from surfaces to which viruses adhere. It is therefore important to carefully observe hygiene recommendations, such as the frequent washing of hands (www.wir-gegen-viren.de).

Why vaccinate? Benefits of vaccination

In Germany, the disease has taken a mild course in most cases in its early phase. In countries that have been particularly affected, a large number of critical cases and even deaths have been reported. Moreover, the virus could undergo a genetic change, which is why further developments are difficult to predict. Even should the virus in future become tolerant against antiviral drugs, one is protected by vaccination. Vaccination is one of the most important and effective protective measures against New Flu. Protect yourself if you belong to the group of persons for whom vaccination is recommended.

Vaccination is offered to you, so that you can protect yourself. It is voluntary. Vaccination is not compulsory.

How does vaccination against New Flu function?

Since the seasonal vaccine does not protect against New Flu, a vaccine against New Flu (so-called Influenza A(H1N1)) has been developed, which contains elements of the New Flu virus and functions, in principle, just like other flu vaccines. In order that many people can be protected and that the vaccine can be effective against the new virus, which might further develop, the vaccine contains an effect-enhancing, so-called adjuvant, which stimulates the immune response to a vaccine. The adjuvant has been tested on more than 20,000 people in clinical tests for flu vaccines. This vaccine can be administered to all persons over the age of six months.

The vaccine dosage depends on the age group. You can obtain more precise information at the place of vaccination.

Important note: Vaccination against New Flu does not replace vaccination against seasonal flu!

For whom is vaccination particularly recommended

According to the German Standing Commission on Vaccination (STIKO), all population groups can benefit from vaccination. However, due to limited production capacity the vaccine will initially not be fully available. STIKO has therefore recommended a time plan for the vaccination of particular groups of persons, so that persons at greater risk can be protected as soon as possible. On account of the present situation, STIKO initially recommends vaccination against New Flu for the following groups of persons:



- Health service and social welfare employees who have contact to patients or infectious material
- Persons of 6 months of age and older who have an increased health risk due to an underlying disease.
- Pregnant women (preferably from the second-third of pregnancy) and women who have recently given birth.

Where necessary, the recommendation can be extended to other population groups at a later point in time.

Vaccination is particularly important for **persons with a weak immune system** or **with a history of chronic disease** (for example, asthma or diabetes), since with infection there would be the risk of a worsening of their condition and the development of complications.

Pregnant women in the second-third of their pregnancy represent a high-risk group for whom vaccination is recommended. The risk of the disease taking a critical course increases with the duration of pregnancy. Until further data is available, STIKO recommends that pregnant women be vaccinated with a vaccine that does not contain an effect-enhancer (adjuvant). STIKO further advises that the decision on vaccination be taken after weighing up the benefits and risks together with a doctor.

Medical personnel are exposed to greater risk of infection due to their close contact to patients. Through vaccination, medical personnel protect not only their own health and that of their families, but also the health of their patients.

Beyond the STIKO recommendation, vaccination against New Flu is also planned for the staff of facilities and institutions that are important for the maintenance of public life. This concerns, above all, police and fire-brigade staff.

Does vaccination against New Flu have side effects?

In the annual adaptation of seasonal flu vaccines it has not been observed that the type and frequency of side effects of flu vaccines have changed. The most common side effects have been irritation at the place of injection, a feverish temperature, tiredness, headaches, aching limbs and muscular pain as well as further light symptoms that confirm that the immune system has begun to work.

A change in the type of side effects with the vaccine against New Flu has not been observed. Through the addition of an effect-enhancer (adjuvant), side effects can be somewhat stronger. Should such side effects last longer than two days, or other symptoms occur, you should consult your doctor.

Acute illnesses with a feverish temperature or known allergic reactions against one of the ingredients of the vaccine are reasons for possibly postponing or dispensing with vaccination. If this is of concern to you, discuss the situation with your doctor before vaccination.

Where is vaccination carried out?

In Germany, every federal state organizes its own vaccination programme, in order that regional distinctions can be considered. You can find out where and when vaccination is being carried out in your community from the responsible local health authority or your general practitioner. You can also obtain information on present vaccination centres from local and regional media.

Further information

The spread and course of New Flu is being intensively monitored in Germany. The Federal Government provides information on the Internet on the present situation, as well as on all important questions concerning possibilities of prevention, behaviour in the case of infection, travel, vaccine and vaccination. The full range of information services can be found at:

www.neuegrippe.bund.de

General information on New Flu ("swine flu") can be obtained on the telephone hotline of the Federal Ministry of Health from Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.:

030 346465100

Information on vaccination is also provided by local health authorities, and many federal states also operate a central telephone hotline:

Bavaria	089-31 56 01 01
Bremen	0421 361 14444
Bremerhaven	0471 596 14444
Hamburg	040-4 28 37 37 95
Lower Saxony	0511-4 50 55 55
North-Rhine Westphalia	0180-3 10 02 10*
Rhineland-Palatinate	06131-16 52 00
Saarland	(general) 0681-5 01 36 94
	(vaccination) 0681-5 01 36 95
Saxony-Anhalt	0391-5 37 7111
Schleswig-Holstein	0431-1 60 66 66
Thuringia	0361-37 74 30 99

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