

# IT STOPS FOR YOU



## Swine Flu Vaccine Fact Sheet

Thank you for attending for your Swine Flu Vaccine

### What is Swine Flu?

Swine Flu is a new flu virus that, for most people, has caused mild to moderate illness. The current flu pandemic is caused by this virus. The swine flu vaccine is the best way to prevent this illness.

### How does the Swine Flu vaccine work?

The vaccine helps your immune system to produce antibodies to the Swine Flu virus. When a person who has been vaccinated comes into contact with Swine Flu these antibodies attack the virus and help prevent you getting the flu.

### How safe is Swine Flu vaccine?

We expect the swine flu vaccine to be as safe as the usual seasonal flu vaccine, which has been used for more than 60 years. Serious side effects are expected to be very rare and the Swine Flu vaccine cannot give you Swine Flu. The vaccines are fully licensed and clinically tested. You can read more about vaccine safety on [swineflu.ie](http://swineflu.ie).

### Is it safe for pregnant women to be vaccinated?

Yes. The vaccine is safe to use in pregnancy and is recommended for all women from 14 weeks of pregnancy to 6 weeks after giving birth. Pregnant women up to fourteen weeks who have an existing at-risk medical condition are also advised to get the vaccine.

### Can the Swine Flu vaccine cause the flu?

No. The Swine Flu vaccine contains killed virus and therefore cannot cause swine flu.

### Is there anyone who cannot get Swine Flu vaccine?

The Swine Flu vaccine should not be given to children under 6 months of age

Everyone from 6 months of age should get the vaccine unless they have

- a severe (life threatening) allergy to eggs or other substances in the vaccine
- previously had Guillain Barre Syndrome

Discuss with the vaccine clinic staff if you are concerned.

## **When should vaccination be postponed?**

Vaccination should not be given if you have a temperature greater than 38°C

## **How long does it take the vaccine to work?**

The vaccine starts to work within two weeks – our current advice is that for you to be fully protected from Swine Flu, you need a second dose of vaccine three weeks later.

## **Where will the Swine Flu vaccine be given?**

You will receive the Swine Flu vaccine in your upper arm. Young children under 3 may receive the vaccine in their thigh.

## **What can I expect after vaccination?**

The most common side effects will be mild and may include soreness, redness or swelling where the injection was given. Headache, fever, aches and tiredness may occur. Some people may have mild sweating and shivering as their immune system responds to the vaccine, but this is not Swine Flu and will pass after a day or so.

## **What if I don't feel well after vaccination?**

Take paracetamol or ibuprofen if you have a fever or pain where the injection was given. Avoid clothes rubbing against the injection area and drink plenty of fluids.

Remember if you or a child is unwell after getting a vaccine, they could be sick for some other reason – don't assume it's the flu vaccine and take medical advice if needed.

## **How to report a side effect?**

As this is a new vaccine the Irish Medicines Board would like to know about any side effects – you can report these by completing the report form at [www.imb.ie](http://www.imb.ie)

## **Do I have to pay for the vaccine?**

The vaccine and its administration are free of charge for everyone.

You may be asked for your PPSN (Personal Public Service Number) when you have your vaccine.

For more information visit [www.swineflu.ie](http://www.swineflu.ie) or call 1800 94 11 00

## **Who do I contact if there's a problem?**

If you or your child has any serious side effects from the vaccine you should contact your GP for advice.

More information

Visit [www.swineflu.ie](http://www.swineflu.ie)  
[www.immunisation.ie](http://www.immunisation.ie)  
[www.hpsc.ie](http://www.hpsc.ie)