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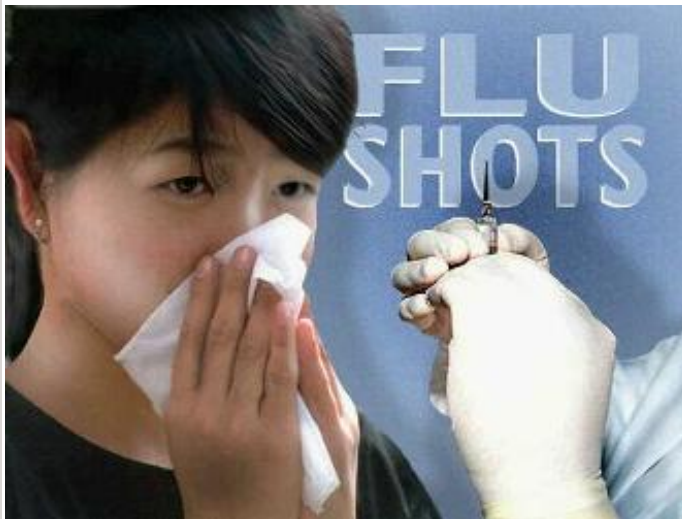
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## Special Edition: Seasonal and 2009 H1N1 (“Swine”) Flu



Blue Shield of California has announced that it will cover the administrative costs of the H1N1 virus (Swine flu) vaccine for all of its fully insured members across all product lines and business segments. Blue Shield will be waiving prior authorizations, copays, and deductibles for office visits when members go to an in-network doctor to get H1N1 vaccinations.

[Read more about what Blue Shield is doing to help combat 2009 flu viruses.](#)

### Recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

In addition to seasonal flu vaccine recommendations, the [CDC](#) strongly recommends that the following groups of people receive the 2009 H1N1 vaccine as soon as supplies become available:

- Pregnant women
- Health care workers and emergency medical responders
- People living with or caring for infants under 6 months of age
- Children and young adults from 6 months to 24 years of age
- People aged 25 to 64 years with underlying health conditions (e.g. asthma, diabetes) or compromised immune systems

If the vaccine supply is not initially sufficient to meet the demand of all the target groups, the CDC further recommends that the following sub-groups be given first priority until vaccine supplies increase:

- Pregnant women
- Health care workers and emergency medical responders
- People living with or caring for infants under 6 months of age
- Children aged 6 months through 4 years
- Children and adolescents aged 5 through 18 years who have health conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications.

Once the demand for vaccine has been met by these priority groups, other adults are encouraged to receive a vaccine. Everyone can take steps now to keep healthy. Go to [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) for flu prevention checklists, as well as the most up-to-date information about seasonal and 2009 H1N1 flu.

### **What can I do to treat influenza of either type: 2009 H1N1 or the seasonal influenza?**

Symptoms are similar for both types of influenza, 2009 H1N1 and seasonal flu, and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people also have diarrhea and vomiting. If you experience these symptoms, stay home and avoid contact with others as much as possible, including avoiding travel and not going to work or school, for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone, except to get medical care or for other necessities. Most people will recover without needing medical care, but those with serious illness or those at risk for complications from flu (pregnant women, young children, people with chronic conditions, and people over 65) should see a health care provider if they experience flu-like symptoms.

Getting the flu vaccine each year is the first and most

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important step in protecting against flu. If you become infected with Influenza, the prescription antiviral medications, oseltamivir (trade name Tamiflu®) and zanamivir (trade name Relenza®), can be taken to decrease the ability of the flu viruses to reproduce. To ensure that sufficient supplies of antiviral drugs are available to help those in greatest need quickly and reduce the changes of antiviral-resistance, the CDC recommends that the use of antiviral medications be prioritized to

- Those who are severely ill (hospitalized)
- People younger than 19 years of age and on long-term aspirin therapy
- Those who are ill with influenza-like illness and at high risk for related complications, including children younger than 5 years of age, adults 65 years and older, pregnant women, and people with certain chronic health conditions or compromised immune systems

Treatment with antiviral medications is generally not needed for people who are not at higher risk for complications or who do not have severe influenza.

Antiviral medications should not be used for preventing influenza in healthy people based on community exposure. Your doctor will decide whether antiviral treatment is right for you. If treatment is prescribed by your doctor, antiviral medication should be started within 2 days after becoming sick to reduce the severity of flu symptoms and to shorten the time you are sick by 1 or 2 days.

Wishing you good health,  
The blueshieldca.com Team

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