

WHO: Pandemic flu vaccine production to fall short

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In this photo made on Friday, Sept. 11, 2009, Safety and security specialist for the Bayer Corporation U.S. headquarters, Thomas Barclay, right, receives an inoculation for influenza from company physicians assistant Tim Grimes, in the Pittsburgh suburb Robinson, Pa. The initial doses of the new swine flu vaccine will only be given to young people, pregnant women and other high-risk groups. Businesses will have to wait until those folks have been immunized to get swine flu vaccine for their workforce. Unless they jump through lots of hoops that vary from state by state to get it, creating confusion for companies, like Bayer, with offices all over the country. (AP Photo/Keith Srakocic)

(AP) -- Global production of swine flu vaccines will be "substantially less" than the previous maximum forecast of 94 million doses a week, the World Health Organization said Friday.

The number of doses produced in a year will therefore fall short of the 4.9 billion doses the global health body previously hoped could be

available for the pandemic, WHO spokesman Gregory Hartl told reporters in Geneva.

Production will be lower because some manufacturers are still turning out vaccines for seasonal flu - an illness that can be serious in sick and elderly people, Hartl said.

Production problems also have reduced the weekly output of pandemic vaccine, he said.

The [United States](#), France, Britain and six other countries announced Thursday that they will share part of their vaccine supply with poorer countries.

WHO welcomed the move Friday, saying it "demonstrates the commitment of these countries to fairness in sharing of scarce resources."

"Current supplies of pandemic vaccine are inadequate for a world population in which virtually everyone is susceptible to infection by a new and readily contagious virus," it said.

WHO says that in theory all the world's 6.3 billion people should receive at least one dose of [vaccine](#) against the [pandemic](#) strain of H1N1 - also known as swine flu - to ensure comprehensive protection against the disease, which has so far killed some 3,500 people.

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