

# Health officials recommend gap between flu spray vaccines

October 16 2009, By Sharmina Manandhar

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Both seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 flu vaccines may be given to a patient at the same visit, as long as they're not both in the nasal spray form, health officials said.

The reason for not mixing the two nasal sprays is to ensure optimum immune response, according to Tom Skinner, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) public affairs officer. If both vaccines are in spray form, they should be given a month apart.

"The attenuated (weakened) viruses in the vaccine have to infect cells in the nose to cause an immune response," wrote Skinner in an e-mail message. "It's believed that if separate viruses were introduced into the nose at the same time then they may compete against each other and result in diminished [immune response](#)."

Both vaccines are also available as injections in which the virus has been killed.

The H1N1 nasal sprays, manufactured by MedImmune, became available almost two weeks ago while the distribution of the shots began this week, according to the CDC.

"Priority groups" have been encouraged to get the H1N1 vaccine. Those groups included pregnant women, people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age, health care and emergency medical services workers, people 6 months to 24 years old, and people

ages 25 to 64 with chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems, according to the CDC Web site.

About 890 people have died nationwide due to H1N1 flu, according to Amanda Aldridge, CDC spokeswoman, who also said that the number may be "an underestimation because we rely on states to send us this information."

Aldridge also recommended getting both seasonal flu and H1N1 vaccines.

"The H1N1 [vaccine](#) will not protect against the [seasonal flu](#)," Aldridge said. "They are different flu strain viruses. You will need to get both the seasonal and H1N1 (vaccines) to protect against both viruses."

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