

US says first swine flu vaccine to arrive Oct. 5

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(AP) -- The first swine flu vaccine should be in some doctors' offices as early as Oct. 5, U.S. health officials said Friday.

These early batches of vaccine will protect 6 million to 7 million people. Over time, the government expects to have a total of 250 million doses of the new vaccine, although 10 percent of that has been promised to other countries.

The U.S. vaccine shipments will go directly to doctors, clinics and other providers designated by each state, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention officials said at a press conference. Most of the initial doses will be a nasal spray form of vaccine, but the majority of doses during flu season will be shots.

CDC officials also said swine flu is widespread in 26 states now, up from 21 a week ago.

Some possible good news - the intensity is trending down a little in the Southeast. The percentage of doctor's office visits for flu-like illnesses fell slightly in Georgia and some other states. However, the improvement is only slight and it's not clear if it's the start of a national trend or not, CDC officials said.

The CDC doesn't have an exact count of swine flu deaths and hospitalizations, but existing reports suggest the infection has caused more than 600 deaths and more than 9,000 hospitalizations.

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