

CDC: H1N1 flu vaccine to be ready by early October (14/9/2552)

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ATLANTA, Georgia (CNN) -- The H1N1 flu vaccine will be available earlier than had been expected, the director of the nation's top disease agency told CNN on Monday.



The vaccine is expected to be available in about three weeks, according to the CDC director.

"We think the first doses of some of the vaccine forms should be available in about three weeks," said Dr. Thomas Frieden, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Previously, the [CDC](#) had been predicting the vaccine would not be available before middle or late October.

Frieden said that the vaccines appear to confer protection from the virus eight to 10 days after they are administered.

The news about the vaccine against H1N1, also called [swine flu](#), comes a week after researchers concluded that a single injection would suffice to protect against the virus.

Health officials are urging that pregnant women, school-age children and anyone with underlying health conditions, like diabetes, heart disease or lung disease, get the swine flu shot.

Frieden said it appears that health workers will be able to administer the H1N1 vaccine at the same time that they administer the shot against seasonal flu.

The symptoms of seasonal flu are similar to those of swine flu, and patients and their caregivers need not know which one they have, he said.

"The key messages are the same in either case: If you're sick, stay home," he said. "If you're severely ill -- and that means you have trouble breathing, you have severe illness, your fever comes back or you have one of those underlying conditions like diabetes or people with special health care problems, like children with disabilities, that make it difficult for them to breathe -- then see your doctor right away."

The timing is important because 11 states already are reporting widespread flu activity. "We wish we had the vaccine today," Frieden said.

He said flu vaccines have a good safety record. "Literally, hundreds of millions of people have gotten the flu vaccine, and certainly my kids will be getting the H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available for everybody."

Frieden's two children are ages 5 and 15.

Source: <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/HEALTH/09/14/h1n1.flu.vaccine/index.html>