

With flu season underway, I want to ensure that all of my constituents are doing everything they can to stay healthy. To that effect, I want to reference some excellent information provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention regarding this years flu season.

What sort of flu season is expected this year?

This flu season (2009-2010), there are more uncertainties than usual because of the emergence of a new [2009 H1N1 influenza virus](#) (previously called "novel H1N1" or "swine flu") that has caused the first influenza pandemic (global outbreak of disease) in more than 40 years.

How severe will this year's season be?

Many people do not have immune protection against this new and very different 2009 H1N1 virus, which has spread worldwide quickly and has been declared a pandemic by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)

. In past years, seasonal flu activity typically did not reach its peak in the U.S. until January or February, but flu activity has occurred as late as May. However, the 2009 H1N1 virus caused illness, hospitalizations, and deaths in the U.S. during the summer months when influenza is very uncommon. So it is not known when flu activity will increase, when it will be most intense (peak), what viruses will circulate, or how long the season might last.

How effective is the seasonal flu vaccine?

The effectiveness of flu vaccines can vary and depends in part on the match between the viruses in the vaccine and the flu viruses that are circulating in the community. If these are closely matched, vaccine effectiveness (VE) is higher. If they are not closely matched, VE can be reduced. During well-matched years, clinical trials have shown VE between 70% and 90% among healthy adults. For more information about seasonal flu vaccine effectiveness, visit ["Ho](#)

[w Well Does the Seasonal Flu Vaccine Work?"](#)

Will the seasonal flu vaccine protect against the new H1N1 Virus? The seasonal vaccine is not expected to protect against the

[2009 H1N1 virus](#)

because it is very different genetically from the seasonal H1N1 virus that is in this season's vaccine. That is why the government and manufacturers are producing a separate

[2009 H1N1 vaccine](#)

designed to protect against the 2009 H1N1 virus.

For more information about this years flu season, and the threat of H1N1, I suggest you visit the useful resources below:

- [2009-10 Influenza Vaccine Supply & Distribution](#)
- [2009–10 Influenza Vaccine Updates](#)
- [2009-10 Influenza \(Flu\) Season](#)
- [Flu Activity & Surveillance](#)
- [2009-10 Free Resources](#)
- [2009-H1N1 Flu](#)