

Vaccination against the new flu / swine flu in Oberhausen

When and where?

On 26 October 2009 - immediately after the autumn half-term holiday – the vaccinations against the so-called New Flu will start in Oberhausen (Germany).

In Oberhausen, the first point of contact for all those who would like to get vaccinated is their own family doctor. A list of registered doctors in private practice who have responded to the Kassenärztliche Vereinigung (health scheme association), is located [here](#).

Vaccination Centre of the Communal Health Department (Impfstelle des städtischen Bereichs Gesundheitswesen),

Tannenbergstraße 11-13, 46045 Oberhausen, Germany

Monday, 26 October 2009, from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon.

Thursday, 29 October 2009, from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon.

Wednesday, 28 October 2009, from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon and from 2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Thursday, 29 October 2009, from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon

Monday, 02 November 2009, from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon

Tuesday, 03 November 2009, from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon

Wednesday, 04 November 2009, from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon and from 2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Thursday, 03 November 2009, from 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon

Vaccination Centres at hospitals in Oberhausen

Additional vaccination dates on Saturdays between 9.00 a.m. and 1 p.m., starting 31 October 2009, are offered by the following hospitals in Oberhausen: Evangelisches Krankenhaus Oberhausen, Helios St. Elisabeth Klinik Oberhausen and the St. Clemens-Hospitals (Robert-Kochstr. entrance).

Who?

In principle, the vaccination against the New Influenza is available to all citizens. However, according to the recommendations of the German Federal Permanent Vaccination Commission (STIKO - Ständige Impfkommission des Bundes) at the Robert-Koch-Institute in Berlin, certain groups of people should receive priority in vaccination, depending on availability of the vaccine.

- People employed in health services as well as those with police, fire department and emergency/rescue services
- People with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, bronchial asthma or cardiovascular disease.
- Pregnant women (preferably after the first trimester of their pregnancy).

Medical Officer of Health Dr. Karbach expressly points out that, in their own best interests, pregnant women and children cannot, on principle, be vaccinated at the Communal Vaccination Centre "since a proper individual risk/benefit assessment, when in doubt, can only be made by the attending gynaecologist and/or paediatrician with knowledge of the case history and other important accompanying circumstances. People who are chronically ill should best turn to their attending doctor for the same reasons."

Any more questions?

A Citizens' Phone has been setup for additional questions. It can be reached Monday through Thursday from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. and Fridays from 9.00 a.m. to 12 noon at **+49 (0) 208 825 3030**.

Download: Information regarding the vaccination

The vaccine

Pandemrix® is the name of one of the vaccines against the New Flu. For Germany as a whole, 50 million doses of the vaccine were ordered. The corresponding sample vaccine has received approval from the European Commission. The prerequisites for this approval included clinical trials involving several thousand subjects, initially adults. Subsequent to the approval by the European Medicines Agency, the respective batch release is performed by the Paul-Ehrlich-Institute.

Who can receive the vaccination?

Anybody who would like to get vaccinated can receive the vaccination.

Since the vaccine will only become available gradually, some groups should receive priority vaccination:

- People employed in health services as well as those working to assure safety and order (which means primarily police, fire department and emergency/rescue services)
- People with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, bronchial asthma or cardiovascular disease
- Pregnant women and children, based on the criteria established by the Permanent Vaccination Commission

The groups mentioned constitute a total of approx. 30 percent of the population. Their selection is based on the recommendations of the scientific specialty authorities (Permanent Vaccination Commission at the Robert Koch Institute, Paul Ehrlich Institute) and of the World Health Organization WHO.

Is the vaccination voluntary?

The vaccination is offered solely on a voluntary basis within the constraints of the vaccine approval.

What is the vaccination like, specifically?

It is an intra-muscular injection, same as is also performed for various other vaccinations.

Which side effects may occur?

In theory, it can not be excluded that upon broad application of a new medication, meaning it also applies to a vaccine, previously unexpected side effects may occur. Up to now, in vaccinations against the Seasonal Flu, local problems such as reddening, swelling or pain at the injection site, which lasted for approx. one to three days, were observed. Mild general problems such as a fever, limb pain, exhaustion, etc. may also occur. But the specialists at the Paul Ehrlich Institute say that such side effects occur only quite rarely, if at all. Therefore, the reporting and assessment of side effects during the application of the vaccines against the New Flu is of special importance. For this purpose, respective surveillance systems for monitoring and recording were setup world-wide, including in Germany.

What happens if the virus mutates - Will the vaccination still provide protection?

Based on all the experience gained with the Seasonal Flu and special sample vaccines, the New Flu vaccine also will still provide protection when the virus changes. But the New Flu vaccine will not help against the viruses currently circulating as the regular flu. They are too different from another after all.

Why should people with basal illnesses get vaccinated against the seasonal and the new flu?

People with basal illnesses are at increased risk for developing severe courses of illness both in case of the Seasonal Flu and also the New Flu. Here, particularly endangered are people who, for example, have a weakened lung function due to asthma or COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) and/or a weakened immune system due to an underlying illness or because they are taking medications. People with basal illnesses should therefore consult and obtain vaccination both against the Seasonal and the New Flu as soon as the vaccine becomes available.

What do pregnant women have to pay attention to with respect to the vaccination against the new flu?

Pregnant women are part of a group for whom many specialists consider a priority vaccination against the New Flu to be important. The epidemiological data regarding the current state shows that pregnant women have an increased risk of severe courses of illness due to the New Flu. But since there are not yet any clinical studies for pregnant women regarding the safety of the vaccine against the New Flu, a vaccination should only occur after a thorough risk benefit assessment jointly with the attending doctor.

Download: Information regarding the pandemic

Pandemic / pandemic plan NRW

A pandemic is a world-wide mass illness, temporally and geographically occurring in spates. The current flu pandemic is caused by a new type of virus which is capable of causing severe illnesses and which is capable of spreading well from human to human. The immune system of people does not know the virus, yet, and is therefore unprotected. On 11 June 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the New Flu to be a pandemic.

Past pandemics

In the 20th century, there were three flu pandemics: 1918, 1957 and 1968. The most severe of them was the so-called Spanish Flu, 1918/19, which killed between 20 and 50 million people world-wide. Likely, several factors played a role in that. The virus, likely was particularly aggressive because at the time there were no vaccines in existence, no anti-viral medications, no antibiotics against the bacterial secondary infections and none of today's intensive care medicine. 1957/58 and 1968/69 two more, weaker pandemics followed, which are estimated to have killed one million people world-wide, each.

How many people will get sick or die in a pandemic?

It is impossible to forecast how severe the course of the pandemic with the New Flu will be. Also, it is not clear which properties the influenza bug may develop. Furthermore, the different countries of the world may be affected to a varying degree, e. g. where there is insufficient health care. Based on the WHO's assessment, this is a moderate pandemic so far.

During the most severe wave of Seasonal Flu this decade, 2004/2005, an estimated 12,000 deaths occurred in Germany with approx. 4.7 millions doctor's visits due to a flu.

How is Germany prepared for a pandemic?

Germany has been prepared for a flu pandemic for years. The regularly updated Pandemic Plan (attached) provides a framework for corresponding plans of the states of Germany (Pandemic Plan NRW) and for the execution plans of the communities. It defines the responsibilities of the public health service.

Pandemic plan NRW

The pandemic framework plan for the state of NRW dated 12 June 2006 (attached) is primarily aimed at the health care institutions and authorities. It contains action guidelines for the different phases of the pandemic on the state level and is supplemented by corresponding documents on the communal level.

All pandemic-specific measures are executed in coordination with the disaster control services, the emergency services and the hospital emergency planning.

The plan expressly does not affect the basic responsibilities of the institutions and authorities.

The responsibility for fighting communicable diseases on-site in NRW rests with the 54 districts and cities administered as an independent district. They know the individual situations and needs in their area (urban areas, rural regions) best and can therefore determine the necessary measure and plan for corresponding regulations.

Certain groups of people are especially important for dealing with the results of a pandemic: people who provide medical care to those who are sick (medical staff at doctor's offices and hospitals) and people who maintain public safety and order, such as members of the police force and the fire department. Their total number in NRW amount to approx. 900,000 people.

For medical care it is planned that the hospitals will be utilized for in-patient care only in cases of unavoidable complications. The treatment of those who are sick should be performed on an out-patient basis as long as possible.

May restrictive measures, e. g. quarantine be imposed?

The German Infection Protection Act (Infektionsschutzgesetz) grants the health departments the right to prohibit events or larger assemblies of people. It is also allows for ordering the quarantining of people who are sick, suspected of being sick or suspected of being infectious. Another option is the closing of common/communal services, such as kindergartens or schools. Whether or not such protective

measures are necessary is determined by the health departments in their own responsibility, based on the specific circumstances of the individual case.