

Flu Vaccine FAQ

When is the best time to get a flu shot?

The CDC recommends getting vaccinated as soon as vaccine becomes available in your community. This will provide protection in case the flu season comes early and it will protect you throughout the entire flu season, especially peak time December – February! Therefore, Iowa State University is offering flu vaccinations in October while supplies last.

Why should you get vaccinated?

CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older as the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease. While there are many different flu viruses, the seasonal flu vaccine is designed to protect against the top three or four flu viruses that research indicates will cause the most illness during the flu season. People should begin getting vaccinated soon after flu vaccine becomes available, ideally by October, to ensure that as many people as possible are protected before flu season begins.

When and Where?

Monday – Friday from 9 am – 4 pm, October 10 – October 21 at the Ames Lab, Occupational Medicine facility (205 TASF)

How much does it cost?

The vaccine is provided for free to eligible employees.

Am I eligible for the free vaccine?

The following groups are eligible to get the shot:

- Faculty, Professional and Scientific, Merit and Post Docs
- Retirees on health plan who are not yet 65
- ISU Foundation employees
- Iowa State Daily employees

Not eligible

- Students (undergrad and graduate) and visiting scholars are not eligible for this service. Contact Thielen Student Health Center for vaccination information.
- Spouses and dependents are not eligible for this service.

Do I need to register?

Registration or appointments are not required during the clinic dates, October 10-21. The clinic is open Monday – Friday from 9am – 4 pm during this time for walk-in flu shots. Appointments may be required after October 21.

Should I just get my flu shot at my physician's office?

Flu immunizations are covered on the ISU health plan so you can get the vaccine at your physician's office. However, we would encourage you to use the worksite option when at all possible; not only is it convenient, but it is more cost effective on your medical plan.

What about my spouse and dependents? Can they get the flu vaccine?

This service is not available at Occupational Medicine for spouses and dependents. However, the flu shot is recommended for anyone 6 years of age and older. Spouse and dependents are encouraged to get their vaccine at a local pharmacy or through their physician's office. *Please note: Extent of insurance coverage for these flu immunizations may vary. You are encouraged to contact customer service (number on the back of the ID card) ahead of time, for your specific coverage.*

What about flu mist this year, I heard it isn't covered?

That is correct. The live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) – or the nasal spray vaccine – is **not** recommended for use during the 2016-2017 season because of concerns about its effectiveness. Because of this, the flu mist will NOT be covered by any ISU plans this year.

What if I am pregnant?

The flu shot is also recommended anytime during a pregnancy. Check with your physician prior to the vaccination if you have questions.

What viruses does the 2016 flu vaccine cover?

Flu vaccines are designed to protect against the main flu viruses that research suggests will be the most common during the upcoming season. Three kinds of flu viruses commonly circulate among people today: influenza A (H1N1) viruses, influenza A (H3N2) viruses, and influenza B viruses.

All of the 2016-2017 influenza vaccine is made to protect against the following three viruses:

- A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus
- A/Hong Kong/4801/2014 (H3N2)-like virus
- B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus. (B/Victoria lineage)

It was recommended that quadrivalent vaccines containing two influenza B viruses contain the above three viruses and a B/Phuket/3073/2013-like virus (B/Yamagata lineage).

The vaccine viruses recommended for inclusion in the 2016-2017 Northern Hemisphere influenza vaccines are the same vaccine viruses that were chosen for inclusion in 2016 Southern Hemisphere seasonal flu vaccines.

Vaccines that give protection against four viruses are called quadrivalent vaccines. **ISU will only be providing the quadrivalent vaccine.** More information about influenza vaccines is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season-2016-2017.htm>

Are there other methods of prevention against flu and cold season?

In 2010, vaccine experts voted that everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccinated each year starting with the 2010-2011 influenza season. Along with getting the flu vaccination, there are other preventative steps you can take to protect yourself against the virus.

1. **Wash your hands on a regular basis.** (Soap and water are best, antibacterial hand sanitizer helps!)
2. **Cover your mouth when coughing or sneezing.** (Best to cough into a sleeve or Kleenex.)
3. **Stay home when you are sick.** (You are considered "contagious" if you have a fever.)
4. **Sanitize work areas or areas of high traffic.** (Wipe phones, counters, computer mouse, door handles, etc.)
5. **Strengthen your immune system!!** (Eat healthy - get plenty of vegetables and fruits; Exercise - maintain regular activity; Rest - slow down your schedule and get plenty of rest!)

I missed the flu clinics, what can I do now?

TBD after the clinic dates.

If you have additional questions, please contact the UHR Service Center at 294-4800.