

## **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, ISU WellBeing 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 1 – October 12 at the Ames Lab, Occupational Medicine facility (205 TASF)

### **How much does it cost?**

The vaccine is provided for free to eligible employees as a service of ISU WellBeing.

### **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 1-12. The clinic is open Monday – Friday from 9am – 4 pm during this time for walk-in flu shots. Appointments may be required after October 12.

### **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 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?**

For the 2018-2019 season, the nasal spray flu vaccine (live attenuated influenza vaccine or "LAIV") is again a recommended option for influenza vaccination of persons for whom it is otherwise appropriate. The nasal spray is approved for use in non-pregnant individuals, 2 years through 49 years of age. There is a precaution against the use of LAIV for people with certain underlying medical conditions. All LAIV will be quadrivalent (four-component). While the flu mist is available this year, it is **not available through the flu vaccination clinic at ISU.**

### **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 2018 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 2018-2019 influenza vaccine is made to protect against the following three viruses:

- A/Michigan/45/2015 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus
- A/Singapore/INFIMH-16-0019/2016 A(H3N2)-like virus
- B/Colorado/06/2017-like (B/Victoria/2/87 lineage) virus

It was recommended that quadrivalent vaccines contain the above three viruses and a B vaccine virus, a B/Phuket/3073/2013-like (B/Yamagata/16/88 lineage) virus.

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 <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season-2018-2019.htm>

### **Is the higher dose vaccine offered?**

No, the higher dose vaccine is not available through the Flu Shot Clinic at ISU. For more information on higher dose vaccines, visit the Centers for Disease Control website at [https://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/qa\\_fluzone.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/qa_fluzone.htm) If you are 65 years or older and want to receive the high dose vaccine, please contact your primary care physician.

### **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.*