

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 9:00am – 4:00pm; October 7 – October 18
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 & 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 7-18. The clinic is open Monday – Friday from 9:00am – 4:00pm during this time for walk-in flu shots. Appointments may be required after October 18.

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 2019-2020 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. 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 2019 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. Employees who participate in the flu shot clinic will receive a quadrivalent (four components) vaccine that protects against A and B flu virus strains. The four viruses it contains are:

- A/Brisbane/02/2018 (H1N1) pdm09-like virus
- A/Kansas/14/2017 (H3N2)-like virus
- B/Colorado/06/2017-like virus
- B/Phuket/3073/2013-like (Yamagata lineage) virus

More information about influenza vaccines is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/season/flu-season-2019-2020.htm>

Is the higher dose vaccine offered?

No, the higher dose vaccine is not available through the ISU clinic. For more information on higher dose vaccines, visit the CDC website: https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/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?

The CDC recommends all persons aged 6 months or older receive an annual flu vaccination, with rare exceptions. Vaccination is particularly important for people who are at high risk for serious flu complications. Along with getting the flu vaccination, there are other preventative steps you can take to protect yourself against the virus.

1. **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.
2. If possible, **stay home when you are sick**. This will help prevent spreading your illness to others.
3. **Cover your mouth and nose** with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
4. **Washing your hands often** will help protect you from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
5. **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth**. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth.
6. **Practice other good health habits**. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

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

TBD after the clinic dates.

If you have further questions, please contact the UHR Service Center at 4-4800.