

2020-2021 SEASONAL INFLUENZA QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



EMAIL: FluDocumentation@TriHealth.com

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VACCINATION INFORMATION

Q1: Do I have to get a seasonal influenza (flu) shot?

A: For the safety of you, your team members, and our patients, **all** TriHealth team members are required to get a seasonal influenza (flu) shot by **November 6, 2020**. Team members who have a currently approved declination will be required to wear a surgical mask for the duration of flu season when within 6 feet of patients if you are not already required to wear a mask for COVID-19 or any other infection control precautions. Acceptable documentation for a medical declination is a statement that the team member has a specified medical contraindication to receiving the seasonal flu vaccine signed by a physician (MD or DO) or licensed independent practitioner (NP).

Team members who do not have a documented and approved medical or other reason for declining this year's flu vaccine (and those team members who have a documented reason, but refuse to wear a surgical mask) will not be permitted to work. They will have the option of applying for an administrative leave of absence. Administrative leaves related to flu vaccinations will be granted for 120 days to coincide with the flu season that starts December 16, 2020, and ends March 31, 2021. Fax completed Flu Administrative Leave forms to the Leave of Absence consultants at 513 852 3146.

Q2: Are agency workers, contractors, or volunteers working at TriHealth required to get a flu vaccine?

A: Yes. Anyone who is issued a TriHealth badge must follow the same flu vaccination requirements as TriHealth team members.

Q3: When and where can I get a flu shot?

A: TriHealth Employee Health will be giving flu shots starting September 28, 2020, through November 6, 2020. Information about times and locations can be found on TriHealth Bridge or from your leader. If you do not work at Good Samaritan Hospital or Bethesda North Hospital, your leader can tell you when flu shots will be available at your location.

THE LAST DAY FLU SHOTS WILL BE GIVEN IS NOVEMBER 6, 2020.

Q4: Which vaccine is being provided by TriHealth Employee Health during the 2020-21 seasonal flu vaccination campaign?

A: The primary vaccine that Employee Health will be providing is the quadrivalent vaccine preparation. Depending on availability, different manufacturer brands with different components will be used. We will also have a limited supply of Flublok, which is egg-free, for those team members who can only receive an egg-free vaccine due to an egg allergy. We will also have a limited supply of the vaccine made with adjuvant for those over 65 that prefer to receive this vaccine. Vaccines are ordered six months in advance, but what is received is always subject to delays in manufacturing/distribution, and the brands we receive are subject to change based on availability.

Q5: Can I receive the egg-free vaccine from Employee Health due to my vegan dietary preference?

A: No, due to the limited supply of the egg-free vaccine for Team Members, it is only available to those who cannot take the standard vaccine due to a medical contraindication. If you want to have an egg-

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free vaccine only due to dietary preferences, you may get the egg-free vaccine from an outside provider who is in your health insurance network. You will be required to provide the documentation that your vaccine was appropriately received somewhere else.

Q6: What if I don't want to wait until TriHealth has received its vaccine supply and is available for my area?

A: You don't have to wait for TriHealth to provide your vaccination. Some provider offices and clinics will receive their vaccine shipments before others due to differences in manufacturers, distribution, and clinical priority. If you want to get your vaccine sooner than is scheduled for your area, you may get your vaccine from any **outside provider who is in your health insurance network**. However, you must provide the documentation that your vaccine was appropriately received somewhere else.

Q7: Should I get the flu vaccine that has a "high dose" or made with adjuvant if I am over 65?

A: You should discuss with your primary care provider whether a higher potency vaccine is appropriate for you. The benefit and risk of the higher potency vaccine is still under investigation and has not been advised by the CDC as necessary for older adults. Employee Health will provide the vaccine with adjuvant (Fluad Quadrivalent) or Fluzone High Dose Quadrivalent to anyone over the age of 65 if requested, subject to availability. Note that an additional consent must be signed to receive the flu vaccine with adjuvant or the "high dose" vaccine.

Q8: Will the egg-free and vaccines only for those over 65 be available during all flu vaccination sessions?

A: No. Due to the limited supply, the egg-free and vaccine only for those over 65 can only be given by appointment in one of the TriHealth Employee Health offices.

Q9: Do I have to provide documentation if I was vaccinated by my primary care physician (PCP) or a non-TriHealth source?

A: Yes, you must provide documentation of your vaccination by November 6, 2020 to TriHealth Employee Health if you were vaccinated by a non-TriHealth source or by your primary care physician, even if your physician is in the TriHealth Healthcare System. (If you are submitting proof of a flu vaccination received elsewhere, you do not need to submit a declination form also.)

Submit your flu vaccination documentation that includes your name and team member ID number to:

- Email: FluDocumentation@TriHealth.com, or
- Good Samaritan Employee Health
379 Dixmyth Avenue, 6th Floor, or
- Bethesda North Employee Health
10506 Montgomery Road, Suite 206

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Q10: If I submitted documentation for a medical or other signed declination last flu season, or I submitted a declination for the prior year, do I need to submit documentation again this year if I am declining the vaccine for the same reason?

A: You need to complete the declination form every year you are declining the flu vaccine, even if it is for the same reason. However, you **do not** need to submit the supporting documentation again.

Q11: How do I submit my documentation to request approval for a medical or non-medical declination?

A: Team members should complete a TriHealth 2020-21 Flu Shot Campaign Medical or Non-Medical Declination Form (“declination form”) which can be found on TriHealth Bridge.

- Use the appropriate form for the declination: medical reason or non-medical reason.
- Clearly print your name, team member ID number, date of birth, phone number, and department.
- Sign the declination form.
- Submit the declination form with the medical or non-medical documentation for approval to:
 - Medical Declination: submit the form to TriHealth Employee Health:
 - Flu Email: FluDocumentation@TriHealth.com, or
 - Good Samaritan Employee Health
379 Dixmyth Avenue, 6th Floor, or
 - Bethesda North Employee Health
10506 Montgomery Road, Suite 206
 - Non-Medical Declination: email the form to your HR Business Partner.
 - Ask your leader if you don’t know who the HR Business Partner is for your area.
- All documentation must be submitted by November 6, 2020.
- Keep a copy for your records.

Q12: What if I don’t want to get the flu shot or wear the surgical mask?

A: Team members who decline the seasonal flu shot and refuse to wear the surgical mask will not be allowed to work and will have the option of applying for an administrative leave of absence. Administrative leaves related to flu vaccinations will be granted for 120 days to coincide with the flu season that starts December 16, 2020, and ends March 31, 2021. Team members must contact HR Service Center at 513-569-5950, option 4 or email LOA@Trihealth.com. Fax completed Flu Administrative Leave forms to the Leave of Absence consultants at 513-852-3146 or email to LOA@Trihealth.com. All documentation must be submitted by November 6, 2020.

Q13: What is the last day of employment for team members failing to obtain the flu vaccination (and who have not received an approved declination)?

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A: Team members who have not received a flu vaccination, received an approved declination, or been placed on Administrative Leave by November 6, 2020, will be removed from the staffing schedule effective **November 20, 2020**. Separation documents will be started at that time.

Q14: What is the flu season duration?

A: The flu season duration is from December 16, 2020, through March 31, 2021, unless the presence of flu is found in the community before December 16, 2020 or continues after March 31, 2021.

Q15: How long are the flu vaccines active?

A: Flu vaccines are active for the entire flu season.

Q16: Since we are receiving the flu vaccine in October and November, will it need to be repeated since the flu season runs through March?

A: The vaccine will not need to be repeated since it is active for the entire season.

Q17: Can my family also get a seasonal flu shot through TriHealth Employee Health?

A: Due to our supply, we provide the flu vaccine only to our team members. We encourage family members to see their primary care providers or other sources to obtain the flu vaccine.

Q18: When and where are seasonal flu shots available through TriHealth Employee Health?

A: The flu shot schedule is on TriHealth Bridge.

Q19: Is the “nasal spray” flu vaccine (Flumist) acceptable for this season?

A: Yes, the Flumist vaccine is approved for use in the 2020-2021 flu season; however, the Flumist vaccine will not be available from the Employee Health Department. If you receive the Flumist elsewhere, please be certain to provide the required documentation to TriHealth Employee Health.

Q20: Can I get the flu vaccine if I am allergic to eggs?

A: Yes, you may safely receive a flu vaccine that contains no egg protein, if you are not allergic to any other of the vaccine components. TriHealth will have a limited supply of an “egg-free” vaccine (Flublok).

MASK INFORMATION

Q21: When must I wear a surgical mask?

A: Team members who have an approved medical or other reason for not getting the flu vaccine will need to wear a surgical mask when within 6 feet of patients if they are not already required to wear a mask for COVID-19 or any other infection control precautions, starting when TriHealth determines that flu season visitor restrictions are required and continuing until these restrictions are removed.

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Q22: What about unimmunized (did not receive a flu shot) team members who are on the units, but do not have direct contact with patients? Will they need to wear a mask?

A: Any team member with a medical or non-medical reason who does not receive the flu vaccine must wear a surgical mask when within 6 feet of patients if they are not already required to wear a mask for COVID-19 or any other infection control precautions. Also, all team members should practice good hand hygiene, along with respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.

Q23: Which masks are needed for team members who are unable to be immunized (get the flu shot)?

A: Team members unable to be immunized for medical or other reasons are required to wear a *surgical mask* when within 6 feet of patients if they are not already required to wear a mask for COVID-19 or any other infection control precautions.

Q24: How frequently should surgical masks be changed?

A: Surgical masks must be changed if they get wet, dirty or contaminated. How often you must replace a clean surgical mask will depend of the supply available during the Covid-19 pandemic. If there is a serious shortage of surgical masks, it may be necessary to wear a surgical mask for more prolonged periods than normal. Your supervisor will be able to tell you how often you may replace your mask depending on current supplies. If there is any doubt about the condition of your mask, it should be replaced as soon as possible.

Q25: Are front desk staff who greet and/or discharge patients required to wear a surgical mask if they do not receive the flu vaccine?

A: Any team member with a medical or other reason who does not receive the flu vaccine must wear a surgical mask when within 6 feet of patients if they are not already required to wear a mask for COVID-19 or any other infection control precautions. This applies to both clinical and non-clinical team members who come within close proximity to patients. Surgical masks are to be worn under these circumstances for the duration of the flu season.

Q26: Are students, vendors, and contractors supposed to get a flu shot or wear a mask like all other team members?

A: Anyone issued a TriHealth badge must follow the same flu vaccination requirements as TriHealth Team Members.

Q27: What about new team members?

A: The HR Talent Acquisition team will inform the candidate of our flu vaccine requirement. The candidate can bring in evidence of receiving a flu vaccine to Employee Health before their corporate orientation day.

The new team member may start working after receiving their flu vaccine. They must wear a surgical mask when within 6 feet of patients if they are not already required to wear a mask for COVID-19 or any other infection control precautions while building their flu immunity.

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If the team member is approved for a medical or non-medical declination, the team member must wear a surgical mask when within 6 feet of patients, if they are not already required to wear a mask for COVID-19 or any other infection control precautions. The declination must be submitted and approved before their corporate orientation date.

If the team member does not submit documentation, have an approved declination, or receive the vaccine before their orientation date, their offer of employment will be rescinded, and they will not be permitted to attend orientation or start working.

Q28: What about team members returning from a pre-approved Medical or other Non-Flu Administrative LOA?

A: Team members scheduled to return from a pre-approved Medical or other Non-Flu Administrative leave of absence during flu season must contact Employee Health before their return for Employee Health to update the team member's flu vaccine status. If the team member received or receives the flu vaccine after November 6, 2020, the team member must wear a surgical mask when within 6 feet of patients, if they are not already required to wear a mask for COVID-19 or any other infection control precautions, for the two-week (14 days) period of building flu immunity.

Q29: What about team members returning from a Flu Administrative LOA?

A: Returning to work from a Flu Administrative leave of absence during or after the flu season is subject to job availability, and scheduled hours will be dependent upon department need as determined by the department leader.

Team members returning during flu season must contact Employee Health before their return for Employee Health to update the team member's flu vaccine status. If the team member received or receives the influenza vaccine after November 6, 2020, the team member must wear a surgical mask when within 6 feet of patients, if they are not already required to wear a mask for COVID-19 or any other infection control precautions, for the two-week period of building flu immunity (14 days).

Q30: What about team members who do not complete and return their Flu Administrative LOA Forms?

A: Notice of separation of employment will be mailed to the home of any team member who does not complete and return the Flu Administrative leave form to their leader and does not receive a flu vaccination or an approved declination for a medical or other reason. The notice will not be mailed to team members who are on pre-approved medical or other types of Non-Flu Administrative leave. Request the Flu Administrative Leave form from the HR Service Center at 513-569-5950, option 4 or email request to LOA@Trihealth.com. Fax the completed Flu Administrative Leave forms to the Leave of Absence consultants at 513-852-3146 or email to LOA@Trihealth.com. All documentation must be submitted by November 6, 2020.

GENERAL FLU INFORMATION

Q31: Where can I get more information about the Flu and the Flu vaccine?

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A: The CDC website has the latest information about the 2020-21 flu season and the flu vaccinations. It is updated regularly as the season progresses, and you can even sign up to get updates sent to you automatically. Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>.

Q32: How can I prevent the transmission of all respiratory infections in healthcare settings, including flu?

A: There are many ways to help prevent the spread of respiratory infections, including:

- Practice good hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette.
- Contain respiratory secretions by covering your nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing.
- Perform hand hygiene after having contact with respiratory secretions and contaminated objects/materials.
- Provide tissues and no-touch receptacles for used tissue disposal.
- Provide conveniently-located dispensers of alcohol-based hand rub. At sinks, ensure that supplies for hand washing are consistently available.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. They hold the most germs, and they are the easiest path for germs to enter the body.
- Observe Droplet Precautions (i.e., wearing a surgical mask when within 6 feet of patients, if you are not already required to wear a mask for COVID-19 or any other infection control precautions), in addition to standard precautions, when examining a patient with symptoms of a respiratory infection, particularly if fever is present.

Q33: What do I do if I get sick with the flu?

A: If you are sick with the flu, you should:

- Stay home from work or school.
- Get lots of rest, drink plenty of liquids, and avoid running errands when you are sick.
- Take over-the-counter (OTC) medications to relieve the symptoms of flu. (Never give aspirin to children or teenagers who have flu-like symptoms, particularly fever.)
- Consult your doctor early on for the best treatment and/or if your symptoms do not improve and/or become worse.
 - Serious illness from flu is more likely in people age 65 years and older, pregnant women, people with certain chronic medical conditions, and young children.
 - Antiviral drugs may be prescribed by your physician soon after you get sick (within two days of the start of symptoms).
- Don't touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. They hold the most germs, and they are the easiest path for germs to enter the body.
- Do not return to work until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever (temperature >100°F) without the use of fever-reducing medicines.

Q34: If I am unable to work because I have the flu, is the lost work time covered by FMLA protection?

A: Team members who are otherwise eligible for FMLA protection may use FMLA time if you are unable to work more than three days, you have medical complications of the flu, or if you are

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hospitalized due to the flu. In all cases, your treating physician must provide the required documentation to the Leave of Absence team.

FLU AND COVID-19*

Q35: What is the difference between Influenza (Flu) and COVID-19?

A: Influenza (Flu) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but different viruses cause them. COVID-19 is caused by infection with a new coronavirus (called SARS-CoV-2), and flu is caused by infection with [influenza viruses](#). Because some of the symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are similar, it may be hard to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone, and testing may be needed to help confirm a diagnosis. Flu and COVID-19 share many characteristics, but there are some critical differences between the two.

Q36: Will there be flu along with COVID-19 in the fall and winter?

A: While it's not possible to say with certainty what will happen in the fall and winter, CDC believes it's likely that flu viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 will both be spreading. In this context, getting a flu vaccine will be more important than ever. CDC recommends that all people six months and older get a yearly flu vaccine.

Q37: Can I have flu and COVID-19 at the same time?

A: Yes. It is possible to have flu, as well as other respiratory illnesses, and COVID-19 at the same time. Health experts are still studying how common this can be. Some of the symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are [similar](#), making it hard to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. Diagnostic [testing](#) can help determine if you are sick with the flu or COVID-19.

Q38: Is COVID-19 more dangerous than flu?

A: Flu and COVID-19 can both result in serious illness, including illness resulting in hospitalization or death. While there is still much to learn about COVID-19, at this time it does seem as if COVID-19 is more deadly than seasonal influenza; however, it is too early to draw any conclusions from the current data. This may change as we learn more about the number of people who are infected who have mild illnesses.

Q39: Will a flu vaccine protect me against COVID-19?

A: Getting a flu vaccine will not protect against COVID-19; however, flu vaccination has many other important [benefits](#). Flu vaccines have been shown to reduce the risk of flu illness, hospitalization, and death. Getting a flu vaccine this fall will be more crucial than ever, not only to reduce your risk from flu but also to help conserve potentially scarce healthcare resources.

Q40: Does a flu vaccination increase your risk of getting COVID-19?

A: There is no evidence that getting a flu vaccination increases your risk of getting sick from a coronavirus, like the one that causes COVID-19.

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RELATED INFORMATION

Q41: Are we placing alcohol hand cleansers at the entrances and encouraging visitors to use them before visiting?

A: Respiratory etiquette stations are placed at critical high-volume entry points at the hospitals.

Q42: Will we be enforcing proper handwashing protocols?

A: We all should be following proper handwashing procedures all the time, and we should kindly remind each other of this an essential practice.

Q43: Who should I contact if I have another question?

A: Please talk to your leader.

*Resource:

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; 1600 Clifton Road, Atlanta, GA 30333, USA
1 800 CDC INFO (1 800 232 4636); TTY: (888) 232 6348; 24 Hours/Day – cdcinfo@cdc.gov
For more information, go to www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm*