

## Flu Shots – Q & A

**Wayne State University requires that all enrolled students receive flu shots by October 15, 2020.**

*Q. Why is Wayne State requiring students to get a flu shot?*

**A.** With the COVID-19 virus still a significant threat to campus health and safety, we are trying to eliminate or at least mitigate the threat of other infectious illnesses, such as the flu. As the flu season ramps up this fall, our campus health professionals must be able to distinguish between the two illnesses, which share common symptoms. If we keep cases minimal, we will be better equipped to handle any COVID-19 patients.

*Q. What is the difference between influenza (flu) and COVID-19?*

**A.** Influenza (flu) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. COVID-19 is caused by infection with a new coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2, and flu is caused by one of four types of influenza viruses: A, B, C and D. Human influenza A and B viruses cause seasonal epidemics of disease — known as the flu season — almost every winter in the United States. Some symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are similar, so it may be hard to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone, and testing may be needed to help confirm a diagnosis.

*Q. Will there be flu along with COVID-19 this fall and winter?*

**A.** While it's not possible to say with certainty what will happen this fall and winter, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) believe it's likely that flu viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 will both be spreading during these upcoming seasons. In this context, getting a flu vaccine will be more important than ever. CDC recommends that all people 6 months and older get a yearly flu vaccine.

*Q. Can I have flu and COVID-19 at the same time?*

**A.** Yes. It is possible have flu (as well as other respiratory illnesses) and COVID-19 at the same time.

*Q. 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 benefits. Flu vaccines have been shown to reduce the risk of flu illness, hospitalization and death. Getting vaccinated will reduce your risk from flu and also to help conserve potentially scarce health care resources.

*Q. 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 much to learn about COVID-19, at this time, it does seem as if COVID-19 is more deadly and more contagious than the flu; 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.

*Q. I've heard that in some people, the flu shot actually causes the flu. Is that true?*

**A.** No, that isn't true. The flu shot contains no live flu virus and cannot cause the flu.

**Q.** *What if I don't want to have a flu shot?*

**A.** There are two exceptions to the mandate: Individuals may provide written documentation from their primary care provider stating that they have medical reasons for not receiving the vaccine or individuals may provide written documentation of a religious objection.

**Q.** *Who do I notify that I have had the required flu shot?*

**A.** If you are a health professional student (e.g. nursing, medicine, pharmacy, physical therapy, etc.), you will notify your department. Each health professional school/college will have a documented process for uploading and verifying that students have had the flu shot. All other students will notify the Campus Health Center through the use of the patient portal, located at [health.wayne.edu](http://health.wayne.edu).

**Q.** *How do I upload flu shot documentation to the Campus Health Center (CHC) Patient Portal?*

**A.** In order to upload your documents to the CHC Patient Portal, go to [health.wayne.edu](http://health.wayne.edu) and click on the link at the bottom left of the page entitled, *Patient Portal*, under the **Useful Links** section. You must create a username and password the first time you use the system. Go to the "messages" or "ask a question" section, and submit a note and upload/attach the file.

**Q.** *What if all my classes are online only? Do I still have to get a flu shot?*

**A.** Wayne State University requires that all enrolled students who intend to be on campus for any day during the fall and/or winter semesters receive a flu shot by Oct. 15, 2020.

**Q.** *Can I get my flu shot from my primary care provider (PCP) or a pharmacy instead of CHC?*

**A.** Students can get their flu shot at any convenient location: your PCP, a pharmacy or on campus. Wherever the vaccine is administered, the student should obtain documentation that includes the date, the student's name and information about the vaccine provided (as there are two different vaccines offered).

**Q.** *How much will the flu shot cost? What if I can't afford it?*

**A.** The flu shot is available for no out-of-pocket cost to all enrolled students if administered by CHC. They will bill your insurance, if you have it, but if insurance does not cover the cost, you will not be billed for the service.

**Q.** *How effective are flu shots? I know some people who get it who still end up getting the flu.*

**A.** The flu vaccine is not a 100% guarantee that you won't get the flu, but it does significantly reduce your chances of getting the illness. If you do get the flu and you've had the vaccine during the duration, the severity of symptoms will be greatly reduced.

**Q.** *Will Wayne State require students to get the vaccine for COVID-19 when it becomes available?*

**A.** That will depend on a variety of factors. We will need to see evidence that the vaccine is safe and effective, and readily available before we make a decision on whether to require it. As always, our decisions on these matters will be completely reliant on science and hard data that demonstrates both safety and efficacy.