



Frequently Asked Questions

OHSU Workforce Member Influenza Vaccination Program 2018-2019

Vaccinations for OHSU workforce members (all OHSU employees, volunteers and students)

Q: Why should I get a flu vaccine?

A: Top 5 reasons to get vaccinated:

1. To protect yourself and your family
2. To protect your patients
3. When you get a flu vaccine, you receive:
 - a. A voucher for a free coffee or tea redeemable at certain OHSU cafes
 - b. A cool sticker showing everyone you got vaccinated!
4. Flu vaccines for OHSU workforce members are free and available at convenient locations. Can't get to a clinic? Check with your manager to see if your clinical area or department has an "Event Manager" who can provide flu vaccines to staff (*employees/volunteers only*).
5. You don't have to wear a mask whenever you are within six feet of a patient in a patient care area throughout the 'masks on' period of influenza season.

Q: How do I get a flu vaccine at OHSU?

A: We want to make it as convenient as possible for you to get your flu vaccine, so for the 2018-2019 OHSU flu clinics, **NO MORE FLU SURVEYS!** That's right, you no longer need to complete a flu immunization survey on ReadySet to get your flu shot. Simply show up at an OHSU flu clinic site and get ready for your shot. To ensure safety of vaccination, you will be screened for contraindications and precautions to the flu vaccine at point of care.

Q: What if I want to decline the flu vaccine or wish to receive the vaccine from my primary care physician (PCP)?

A: You may choose to decline the flu vaccine or receive the vaccine from your PCP or local pharmacy. However, we do need to document a declination or receipt of vaccination elsewhere so you will need to complete a Seasonal Flu Immunization survey on ReadySet. Once completed, employees and volunteers must contact Occupational Health to receive a '18 influenza vaccination sticker to place on their ID badge. Students and postdoctoral fellows should contact JBT Health & Wellness for their sticker. Please note that when you get vaccinated at an outpatient clinic (even if it's an OHSU clinic), pharmacy, store or community site, you or your insurance carrier will be billed for this service. The charges will not be reimbursed by Occupational Health or JBT Health & Wellness.

Q: If I do not receive the vaccine, how does this impact my work?

A: If you do not receive the flu vaccine, you will be required to wear a surgical/procedure mask whenever you're within six feet of a patient in a patient care area throughout the 'masks on' period of influenza season. (See "Masking" section toward the end of this document)



Q: Where can I get my flu vaccine?

A: Here are **five** ways for workforce members to get their flu vaccine:

- 1) At an OHSU Flu Clinic site– see the flier posted at <https://o2.ohsu.edu/occupational-health/>
- 2) At JBT Health & Wellness Center, students and postdoctoral fellows may drop in for a flu vaccine or call 503-494-8665 to schedule an appointment during regular business hours. You must be registered as a patient prior to receiving a flu vaccine at JBT. Call 503-494-8505 to register. Students and Postdoctoral Fellows may also obtain their Flu vaccine at the Graduate Student Orientation Barbeque (scheduled for 9/27/18 from 5:00pm- 7:30pm).
- 3) At Occupational Health, employees and volunteers may receive a flu vaccine and other services by scheduling an appointment or during our walk-in hours (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 6:15 AM-5:00 PM). Call 503-494-5271 to schedule (or 503-346-5040 for West Campus).
- 4) On many nursing units and ambulatory care sites, where an Event Manager can vaccinate any faculty, staff or volunteer (ONLY) and document it in your ReadySet record.
- 5) At your primary care provider's office or local retail pharmacy. **If you select this option, please note that you have financial responsibility for any charges associated with this.**

Q: What is an Event Manager? (EMPLOYEES/VOLUNTEERS ONLY)

A: An Event Manager is a healthcare worker from your department/unit/clinic who has been trained by Occupational Health to provide flu vaccines (as well as TB skin testing and N95 mask fit testing) to employees and volunteers in your work area. This includes administering the vaccine, documenting in your ReadySet record, and giving you the checkmark sticker indicating that you have received your flu vaccine for the season.

Q: What if I'm a contract employee or Non-OHSU student?

A: You will need to receive your flu vaccine outside of Occupational Health or JBT Health & Wellness, but still provide proof of receiving your vaccine in order to receive the '18 influenza vaccination sticker to place on your ID badge. Send your documentation to occhealth@ohsu.edu and include an OHSU mail code to which your sticker can be sent.

Q: Is it a HIPAA privacy violation for OHSU to require workforce members to place a sticker on the identification badge indicating that they received the flu vaccine?

A: No. Both receipt of the flu vaccine and the required placement of the sticker on the OHSU ID badge are in compliance with privacy laws and regulations, such as those required by Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). Workforce member health information required for employment or student enrollment purposes is not Protected Health Information and as such is not a HIPAA violation.

Q: Is placement of the sticker on the OHSU ID badge a violation of OHSU Identification Cards Policy No. 07-90-001?

A: No. OHSU Public Safety was consulted regarding the size and the placement of the stickers to comply with [OHSU Identification Cards Policy No. 07-90-001](#). The sticker should be placed in the top left corner, immediately adjacent to the photo, of the front of the OHSU identification badge for the duration of the influenza season.



About influenza and the vaccine

Q: What is influenza? What are the symptoms? How do I know if I have it?

A: Influenza ('flu') is a contagious respiratory disease caused by the influenza virus and can be spread by coughing, sneezing and by touching contaminated surfaces. Individuals infected with influenza are contagious and spread the disease to others, even as early as 1 day before the symptoms even appear. Influenza can cause mild to severe illness. At times, it can cause death. Symptoms can include fever, muscle aches and pains, sore throat, headache, extreme tiredness, nonproductive cough, and/or a runny or stuffy nose.

Q: When is flu season? How long does it last?

A: In the United States, the flu season is considered October through May. It usually peaks in February.

Q: The flu season happens every year anyway. Why is getting vaccinated so important?

A: The single best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated each year. Flu illness is known to cause more than 200,000 hospitalizations and 36,000 deaths in the U.S. each year. Flu viruses are constantly changing, and annual vaccinations is a way to keep up with these changing viruses. The vaccine is reformulated each year in an attempt to match the strains of the circulating virus. The influenza vaccine is a safe and effective way to prevent influenza.

Q: Who recommends that health care workers receive the seasonal influenza vaccine?

A: Many professional medical societies recommend the annual flu vaccine. This list includes the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), the American College of Physicians (ACP), and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) all recommend this vaccine, as do the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID), the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) and the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC).

Q: How is the influenza vaccine given?

A: The most common influenza vaccine is given by an intramuscular injection in the upper arm and contains inactivated (killed) viruses. This is the type of flu vaccine most commonly administered through OHSU's Occupational Health and JBT Health & Wellness. For the 2018-2019 season, the nasal spray flu vaccine (live attenuated influenza vaccine or "LAIV") is again a recommended option for influenza vaccination for whom it is otherwise appropriate.

Q: Is the nasal spray flu vaccine available at OHSU's flu clinics?

A: The nasal spray flu vaccine will not be available at flu clinics/departments/units, but may be requested under special circumstances and will only be administered at Occupational Health, by one of our providers, after careful screening is performed. The nasal spray is approved for use in non-pregnant individuals, 2 years through 49 years of age. People with some medical conditions should not receive the nasal spray flu vaccine. ACIP and the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC) have previously recommended that health care personnel who receive LAIV should avoid providing care for severely immunosuppressed patients requiring a protected environment for 7 days after vaccination.

Q: Who should get the seasonal influenza vaccine? Are there any restrictions?

A: The CDC recommends influenza vaccination for all persons above the age of 6 months with very limited exceptions. Nearly everyone can receive the injected form of the vaccine.



Q. I am over 65 years of age. Should I receive the flu vaccine?

A. Vaccination is especially important for people 65 years and older because they are at high risk for complications from flu. The CDC and its Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices have not expressed a preference for any flu vaccine indicated for people 65 years and older. However, there is a “high dose” vaccine designed specifically for people 65 years and older that contains 4 times the amount of antigen as the regular flu shot. It is associated with a stronger immune response following vaccination (higher antibody production). There are screening questions that you must answer prior to receiving this vaccine, confirming that it is safe and appropriate for you to receive. This alternative form of the vaccine will not be available in departments/clinics/units but will be available at OHSU flu clinics.

Q. What can I do if I'm allergic to eggs?

A. CDC recommends people with a history of egg allergy of any severity to receive any licensed, recommended, and age-appropriate influenza vaccine. Those who have a history of severe allergic reaction to egg (i.e., any symptom other than hives) should be vaccinated in an inpatient or outpatient medical setting, under the supervision of a healthcare provider who is able to recognize and manage severe allergic conditions. Occupational Health and JBT Health & Wellness will have a limited supply of egg-free vaccine available for individuals who would like an egg-free flu vaccine. This alternative form will not be available in departments/clinics/units.

Q: How safe is this vaccine?

A: Influenza vaccines have been given since 1943. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers influenza vaccines to be very safe. The most common side effects include soreness, redness or swelling at the site of the injection. These reactions are temporary and occur in 15 to 20 percent of recipients. Less than 1 percent of recipients of the vaccine develop symptoms such as fever, chills and muscle aches for 1 to 2 days following the vaccination. These symptoms are more likely to occur in a person who has never been exposed to the influenza virus or vaccine. In 1976, the swine flu vaccine (injectable) was associated with a severe illness called Guillain-Barre syndrome (GBS), which caused paralysis in some people. It is estimated that fewer than one in one million people will get this disease. However, as a precaution, any person who previously experienced GBS within six weeks of a previous influenza vaccination should not generally receive the flu vaccine and should speak to their primary care provider.

Q: Can the influenza vaccine cause influenza?

A: No. Receiving the flu vaccine does not cause influenza. You may have mild fever, chills or aches for a very brief period after vaccination, but this is a sign your body is making antibodies against the flu. It is not the flu.

Q: Is it safe for pregnant women to get the influenza vaccine?

A: Yes. In fact, vaccination with the inactivated (“killed”) influenza vaccine is recommended for women who are or will be pregnant during the influenza season. The live-attenuated intranasal vaccine is not licensed for use in pregnant women.

Q: How effective is the seasonal influenza vaccine?

A: When the “match” between the vaccine and circulating strains is close, the injectable (inactivated) vaccine prevents seasonal influenza in about 70 to 90 percent of healthy persons younger than 65 years of age. It is not known until flu begins circulating in the area how well the vaccine matches the strain.



Q: When can I come back to work if I get the flu?

A: OHSU's [Illness Among OHSU Healthcare Workforce Members Policy \(HC-HR-100-RR\)](#) states that all workforce members with influenza must remain at home until their fever is resolved for 24 hours and symptoms are resolved.

Q: What other measures should I take to prevent influenza?

A: Good hand hygiene (including frequent hand washing) and good cough etiquette (directing your cough or sneeze into your elbow, throwing away used tissues promptly) are important preventive practices for the flu season, as well as receiving the flu vaccine annually. For more information on this important topic, please see [the CDC's website](#).

Q: Where can I get more information about the Influenza vaccine and what's new this season?

A: You can get more information from the CDC's Frequently Asked Flu Questions 2018-2019 Influenza Season here: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season-2018-2019.htm>

Masking

Q: Why did OHSU implement a masking policy?

A: Not all individuals show symptoms of influenza but can spread the disease while at work. Those who don't get the vaccine are at a greater risk of contracting and spreading influenza to patients, other workforce members and their families. The masking policy helps protect patients, visitors and coworkers. Masking policies have also been recommended by the American Hospital Association (AHA). View the [Influenza Vaccination and Masking Policy \(HC-HR-119-RR\)](#).

Q: What does the masking policy mean for me? How does it apply to what I do?

A: The masking policy may or may not apply to you. If you get vaccinated this season, the masking policy does not apply to you. If you are unable or unwilling to get vaccinated, then it does apply if you go within 6 feet of a patient in a patient care area.

Q: Why does OHSU require healthcare workforce members to wear a procedural/surgical mask when within 6 feet of patients in a patient care area during flu season if the health care worker does not get the influenza vaccine?

A: OHSU implemented this masking policy to protect patients, visitors, employees, students and volunteers from influenza. This decision is based on expert recommendations and has been implemented in many prominent healthcare organizations across the country.

Q: Does everyone at OHSU have to wear a mask?

A: No, just healthcare workforce members who have NOT been vaccinated against flu. The term 'OHSU Healthcare workforce members' refers to persons who perform work for or on behalf of OHSU Healthcare, including:

- All employees (faculty, represented, unclassified administrative and other categories)
- Registered and visiting students
- Volunteers
- Board members
- Visiting healthcare practitioners
- Contracted non-permanent individuals
- Vendors while doing business with and others who work for or on behalf of OHSU Healthcare (refers to all persons, paid and unpaid, working in healthcare settings who



have the potential for exposure to patients and/or to infectious materials, including body substances, contaminated medical supplies and equipment, contaminated environmental surfaces, or contaminated air)

These personnel will be required to wear masks when they are within 6 feet of any patient in patient care areas during the 'masks on' period of influenza season.

Q: Who does the requirement apply to?

A: The requirement to either be vaccinated or to wear a surgical mask in a patient care area and within 6 feet of a patient during the 'masks on' period of the flu season refers to all persons, paid and unpaid, working in health care settings who have the potential for exposure to patients and/or to infectious materials, including, but not limited to:

- Body substances
- Contaminated medical supplies and equipment
- Contaminated environmental surfaces
- Contaminated air

Healthcare workforce members include, but are not limited to:

- Physicians and other Licensed Independent Practitioners (LIPs)
- Nurses
- Nursing Assistants
- Medical Assistants
- Therapists
- Technicians
- Emergency medical service personnel
- Dental personnel
- Pharmacists
- Laboratory personnel
- Students and trainees
- Contractual personnel
- Home health care personnel
- Persons not directly involved in patient care (e.g., clerical, dietary, housekeeping, laundry, security, maintenance, ITG, billing, chaplains, and volunteers) but potentially exposed to infectious agents that can be transmitted to and from OHSU Healthcare workforce members and patients.

Compliance with this infection control policy will be monitored and enforced. View the Influenza Vaccination and Masking Policy (HC-HR-119-POL).

Q: What does "patient care area" mean?

A: "Patient care areas" include, but are not limited to, inpatient units, pre-op areas, operating rooms, ambulatory care clinics, procedural units and the Emergency Department.

Q: Why do I need to wear a mask if I am not vaccinated and I take care of patients?

A: You may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick as well as while you are sick. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning one day *before* symptoms develop and 5 to 7 days *after* becoming sick. Some healthy adults who contract the flu have mild symptoms they may not recognize as flu. Wearing a mask will prevent the spread of the disease even if you do not yet have symptoms. If you have symptoms of the flu, notify your supervisor you're becoming ill and arrange to go home.



Q: When the 'masks on' message has gone out, can I still get vaccinated? Will I still have to wear a mask?

A: You can still be vaccinated through one of the opportunities described previously. Until you are vaccinated, you must wear a mask whenever you are within 6 feet of any patient in patient care areas. After you get vaccinated you can take off the mask, but you are encouraged to continue wearing a mask for two weeks after you receive a flu vaccine while your vaccine takes effect. If you get vaccinated outside of Occupational Health, you are required to complete your seasonal influenza vaccination survey so that your manager can see it's been received. Please contact Occupational Health at 503-494-5271 or occhealth@ohsu.edu (or 503-346-5040 for West Campus) or the JBT Health & Wellness Center at 503-494-8665 to request a '18 influenza vaccination sticker to place on your ID badge.

Q: We don't keep masks on hand in my department or work area. Where do I get one?

A: You will only need a mask if you are not vaccinated and you are going to be in a patient care area and within 6 feet of a patient. If you are going to a patient care area and you will be within 6 feet of patients, you can get a mask from the area you are going to. Or you can ask your supervisor to order some masks to keep in your usual work area. In the event you do not have masks available in your patient care area, you may order them by visiting [the Logistics website](#). Order item # 124490, Item Description Mask Procedure ear loop yellow, Manufacturer ID #47117, Quantity order by the box (there are 50 masks to a box). For questions, call the Logistics Warehouse at 503-494-5666.

Q: How will supervisors know who needs to wear a mask?

A: Individuals who receive the influenza vaccine will have a '18 sticker placed on their OHSU identification badge. Because there are multiple disciplines that have direct patient contact (e.g., faculty, residents, nurses, respiratory therapists, patient transporters, environmental services staff, etc.), a visual identifier is important to assure compliance and patient safety. The sticker provides the necessary visual identifier. In addition, supervisors will have access to reports as to which of their staff have/have not received the vaccine. Program Deans will also receive information about students not compliant with required annual vaccinations.

Q: What if I see someone in my unit who is not vaccinated and is not wearing a mask?

A: With the strong emphasis on getting vaccinated and the implementation of the masking policy, we are helping reinforce a culture of safety for patients and workforce members. If you see another workforce member without a flu sticker, you can remind them about the 'masks on' policy, or talk to their supervisor about following up with that person.

Q: What if a patient asks me why I'm wearing a mask?

A: We expect our workforce members to be truthful with our patients if asked about our influenza vaccination policy. Our requirement is intended to prevent transmission of the flu from non-vaccinated workforce members to patients. Wearing a mask protects the patient and the workforce member. Here's an example of a response: "I have not received the flu vaccination. I'm wearing the mask for the safety of our patients during the flu season." Or "I'm wearing a mask to prevent the spread of flu." This is an opportunity to raise awareness and educate our patients about our compliance requirement and our ongoing commitment to patient safety during the flu season. This measure is about putting patients first, and is intended to protect patients and workforce members from infection.



Q: Do other hospitals and academic medical centers require masking of unvaccinated staff?

A: Yes, and the number is growing. Among Oregon hospitals that require masking of non-vaccinated health care workers or employees at Peace Health, Sacred Heart Medical Center and Tuality Healthcare. Nationally, peer institutions such as Johns Hopkins Hospital, Emory University hospital system, Children's Hospital of Pennsylvania, Washington University, Virginia Mason and many others have adopted similar policies.

Questions or comments? Employees and volunteers may contact Occupational Health on the Marquam Hill campus at 503-494-5271 or occhealth@ohsu.edu (or 503-346-5040 at WestCampus) or visit the Occupational Health website. Students may contact the JBT Health & Wellness Center at 503-494-8665

