

2023–2024 Influenza Season

Frequently Asked Questions

Influenza (the flu) can be a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death. Anyone can get very sick from the flu, including people who are otherwise healthy. Requiring an annual flu vaccine demonstrates our commitment to protect the safety and health of our patients, many of whom already have weakened immune systems, colleagues and family members.

JHM MANDATORY VACCINATION POLICY FOR 2023-24

Who does the policy apply to?

The mandatory vaccination policy applies to ALL JHM (Johns Hopkins Health System and Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine) faculty, staff, trainees, students, volunteers, and vendors irrespective of current work location. All Johns Hopkins University (JHU) employees, faculty, staff, and students must receive the vaccine if they will be participating in on-campus activities. This requirement represents an effort to protect all Johns Hopkins employees from influenza and is as a condition of employment, appointment to the medical staff or access to patient and clinical care areas.

When is the compliance deadline for vaccination?



As outlined in Johns Hopkins [Mandatory Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Policy HEIC002](#), the deadline is the third Friday in November. This season, the deadline is **Nov. 17, 2023**.

GETTING A VACCINATION

What are my options to get a flu vaccination this year?

There are four options to get a vaccination:

- At one of the on-campus vaccination clinics
- On selected [department clinical units](#)
- Using the vouchers noted below
- Using personal insurance at external health care location or retail pharmacy

Walgreens

Johns Hopkins employees will also be able to get a free vaccination at any Walgreens retail pharmacy location. You will need to present a [voucher](#).

**Vouchers are not offered to individuals with a primary affiliation of student.*

On Campus

The flu vaccination clinics will be held at the following [Johns Hopkins Onsite Clinic Locations](#).

After you are vaccinated at the clinic, you will receive an orange clip as evidence that you have received a vaccination.

On the East Baltimore Campus, the flu vaccine will be offered at the [Arcade Pharmacy](#) from November 6 to November 17, Monday through Friday 8am-8pm.

2023–2024 Influenza Season

Clinical Units

Many of the nursing units have designated [flu champions](#). They can provide flu vaccines to staff on their unit.

Doctor's office or pharmacy.

If you receive the vaccine elsewhere, including a Johns Hopkins Community Physicians or Regional Physicians clinic, please submit your documentation by **Nov. 17** via this link to submit proof of vaccination for yourself or someone else:



[Vaccine Management System](#)

What should I wear when I get my flu vaccine?

The flu vaccine is given in your upper arm. Please wear either short sleeves, or sleeves that can easily be pulled up to your shoulder.

GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Will a flu vaccine protect me against COVID-19?

No, getting a flu vaccine will not protect against COVID-19. However, getting a flu vaccine this year will be more important than ever. The flu weakens the immune system and the combination of flu with COVID-19 may lead to a more serious illness than either condition alone.

Is it safe to get the flu vaccine at the same time as the COVID vaccine?

Yes. When the COVID-19 vaccine was first approved for emergency use authorization (EUA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) had recommended delaying other vaccines for at least 14 days after receiving a COVID-19 vaccine. This was done out of an abundance of caution because the vaccine was new. The CDC has since collected more data regarding the COVID-19 vaccine and no longer recommends delaying other vaccines. The CDC states that COVID-19 vaccines may be administered without regard to timing of other vaccines.

Is it true that you can get the flu from the flu vaccine?

No, you cannot get the flu from the flu vaccine. The virus in the vaccine is not live and therefore, cannot cause the flu. Some people mistakenly confuse flu symptoms with the vaccine side effects. The most common side effects are:

- Soreness, redness or swelling where the shot is given
- Low-grade fever and aches
- Runny nose, sore throat, cough, and headache (nasal mist only)

Almost all people who receive the influenza vaccine have no serious problems. However, employees who believe that they are experiencing adverse effects related to the vaccination should contact their local [Occupational Health office](#).

I am pregnant. Should I get the flu vaccine?

Yes. Pregnant women should receive the injectable flu shot. It is especially important for pregnant women to get the flu shot because they are more likely to have serious complications to themselves and their pregnancy if they become ill. According to the CDC, they can receive the flu shot at any time during their pregnancy.

2023–2024 Influenza Season

I received a flu vaccine in early 2023. Do I need to get another one?

Yes. The flu vaccine formulation is updated every year in August. The current flu vaccine is valid August 2023 through May 2024. The vaccine that you received in the spring was for the previous flu season (2022-23).

DOCUMENTATION

How can I get a copy of my vaccine record?

If you receive a copy of your flu vaccine record at the time of service, keep this copy in a safe place until the end of the flu season. We also recommend that you take a picture of it with your smart phone or scan it onto your computer.

If you get your flu shot at an on-site clinic, you may not get a copy of your vaccine record at the time of service. You will receive a confirmation email from VMS once your flu vaccine has been recorded by OH. You may use this as proof of vaccination.

If you received your flu vaccine from Walgreens, either at the on-site clinic or at their [retail location](#), you can also access your records by using www.walgreens.com. You will need to make an account if you don't have one already.

All vaccines given in Maryland must be reported to the Department of Health. Anyone may access their own vaccine records by creating an account at [Maryland MyIR](#).

I received my flu vaccine at Walgreens using a voucher. How will my manager know that I got my flu shot?

This year, by choosing to use a voucher to obtain your flu shot, you must first check "I Agree" to allow your flu shot information to be shared with Johns Hopkins occupational health office. This will save you time and ensure you are in compliance with the flu shot policy.

I received my flu vaccine at an outside location. How do I get my flu clip?

For East Baltimore Campus employees, [flu clips](#) are available in the [Employee Health and Wellness Clinic \(EHWC\)](#) located in the Phipps Building, 3rd floor, Monday through Friday 8am-3pm. You must provide proof of receiving your vaccine or already submitted record to [VMS](#). You may also pick up a clip at any on-site flu clinic. All other entities may contact their local OH office for flu clip pick-up locations.

EXCEPTIONS

What about a person who has medical or religious reasons for declining vaccination?

An exception to the vaccination policy may be requested for certain medical reasons, including

documentation of severe allergy to the vaccine or components as defined by the most current recommendations of the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) or a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome within six weeks of an influenza vaccine. If receiving the vaccination conflicts with sincerely held beliefs, a request for religious accommodation may be made.

2023–2024 Influenza Season



All Medical and Religious Exception Request forms must be received no later than **Oct. 31, 2023**.

How do I request an exception?

Medical Exception

Personnel must submit an exception form and a letter from their provider using the [\(VMS\) Vaccine Management System](#).

Religious Exception

Religious exceptions can also be requested using [VMS](#).

I received an exception last year. Do I have to submit the paperwork again this year?

Yes. All personnel who have a medical or religious exception must submit a new request. Because the composition and availability of flu vaccines changes from year to year, certain allergies or concerns may no longer be relevant.

If my request for a medical or religious exception is approved, will I still be able to work?

Yes. Those who cannot receive the flu vaccine, whether for religious or medical reasons, will be required to properly wear a protective surgical mask over their mouth and nose when within 6 feet of any patient and when entering a patient room during the influenza season (unless contraindicated by local regulations and guidelines). The effective dates of the flu season will be identified by Department of Hospital Epidemiology and Infection Control (HEIC). This important step to prevent flu transmission is supported by national patient safety and infectious disease prevention organizations.

COMPLIANCE

What happens if I don't comply with the policy?

Faculty and staff

Any JHM employee covered by this policy who fails to receive a vaccination before the compliance deadline and who has not received an exception will be placed on an unpaid administrative leave of one week or less. If, at the end of the administrative leave, the employee has not met the vaccination requirement, the employee will be considered to have voluntarily resigned.

Non-employees

Students, volunteers, vendors and temporary workers who do not comply will not be permitted to enter patient care or clinical care areas for the duration of the flu season.

Medical staff

Medical staff at all entities who do not comply will be placed on administrative suspension of privileges for the duration of the flu season and will be denied access to patient and clinical care areas. Such actions are reportable to the Maryland Board of Physicians if the suspension lasts for more than 30 days in a calendar year.

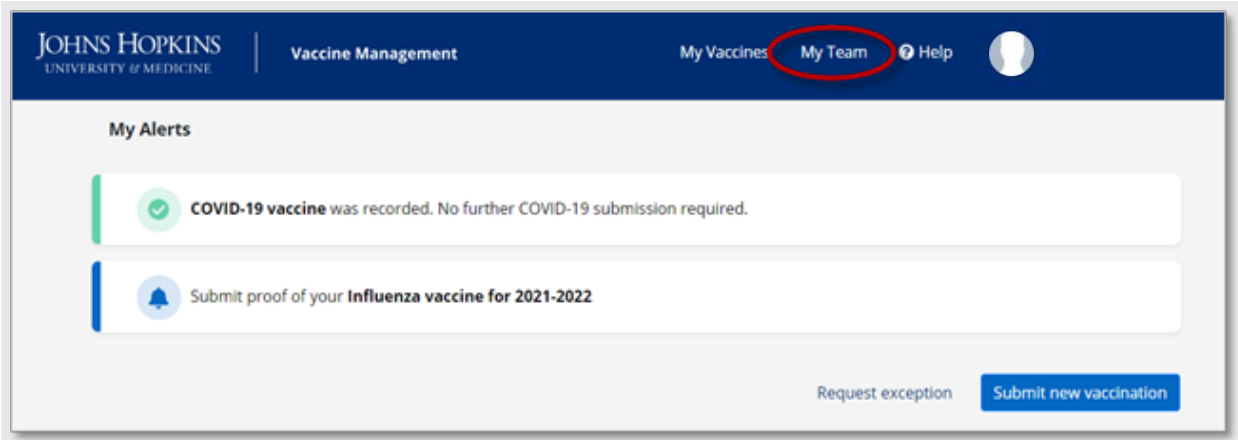
Anyone granted a medical exception or religious accommodation is required to wear a surgical mask within six feet of a patient during the influenza season (unless contraindicated by local regulations and guidelines). Those who fail to do so will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

2023–2024 Influenza Season

I am a manager. How do I track vaccination compliance?

Managers may see their team’s compliance by accessing VMS and clicking on “[My Team](#)” on the banner at the top of the page. This will list all of their direct reports and show their compliance status. This is based on SAP organizational unit.

If you are a manager and do not have the “[My Team](#)” tab, please contact your Human Resources Representative.



MORE INFORMATION

Centers for Disease Control: cdc.gov/flu

Health, Safety and Environment: hopkinsmedicine.org/hse

Questions: MandatoryFluVaccine@jhmi.edu