

2020–2021 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 2020-21

Who does the policy apply to?

Typically, the JHM [policy](#) requires that Johns Hopkins Medicine faculty, staff, postdoctoral fellows, medical residents and medical students of The Johns Hopkins Hospital, Johns Hopkins Health System Corporation and the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine who provide patient care, work in a hospital building, or whose primary work location is in a patient or clinical care area receive the influenza vaccine each year, or be granted an approved exception. This mandate is as a condition of employment, appointment to the medical staff or access to patient and clinical care areas.

For the 2020-21 flu season, the mandatory vaccination policy applies to ALL 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 employees, faculty, staff and students must receive the vaccine if they will be participating in on-campus activities. This interim requirement represents an effort to protect all Johns Hopkins employees from influenza and better manage the COVID-19 pandemic and includes personnel who may not have been required to get a flu vaccination in the past because of their role, responsibility or work location.

When is the compliance deadline for vaccination?



As outlined in Johns Hopkins Mandatory Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Policy [HSE048](#) the deadline is the **third Friday in November**. This season, the deadline is **Nov. 20, 2020**.

GETTING A VACCINATION

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

There are four options to get a vaccination:

- Any Walgreens retail pharmacy in the country
- At one of the on-campus vaccination clinics
- On selected [department clinical units](#)
- Another retailer offering vaccinations or your doctor's office

Walgreens

Johns Hopkins Medicine employees will also be able to get a free vaccination at any Walgreens retail pharmacy location. You will need to present a [voucher](#) and your Johns Hopkins ID. ****Note: Voucher not compatible with Internet Explorer; please use Chrome, Firefox, or Safari****

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On Campus

On the East Baltimore campus, the flu vaccination clinic will be held in the Phipps Building Houck Lobby beginning Monday, Sept. 21. This clinic will be open Monday through Friday, 7 a.m.-4 p.m. through Oct. 23, 2020, and will be staffed by Walgreens pharmacists. To help comply with physical distancing guidelines, an **appointment will be required** to get a vaccination at the clinic. An appointment can be made using [Microsoft Bookings](#). You will receive a silver clip as evidence that you've received a vaccination.

After Oct. 23, 2020, the flu vaccine will be offered at the [Arcade Pharmacy](#) on the East Baltimore campus.

Clinical Units

Many of the nursing units have a designated flu champion. The flu champions can provide flu vaccines to staff on their unit. Click [here](#) to find out what units have a flu champion.

Doctor's office or another location other than a Johns Hopkins medical facility (i.e. drug store)

If you receive the vaccine elsewhere, including a Johns Hopkins Community Physician clinic, please submit your documentation by **Nov. 20** via the [online influenza reporting website](#). Use this link to submit proof of vaccination for yourself or someone else:



<http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/hse/forms/fluform/selfreporting.html>

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.

Why is it important to get a flu vaccine during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Flu vaccination is still the best way to reduce the incidence of Influenza in our community. Reduction of Influenza cases will help to ease the burden on the health care system during a busy respiratory virus season. Additionally, patients may be resistant to seeking health care for mild illnesses due to fear of catching COVID-19. Outcomes of having the flu could potentially be more devastating for those who choose to not seek care when needed.

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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, if an employee believes that they are experiencing adverse effects related to the vaccination should contact [Occupational Health](#).

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.

DOCUMENTATION

How can I get a copy of my vaccine record?

If receive a copy of your flu vaccine record at the time of service, keep this copy in a safe place until the end of 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 once your flu vaccine has been recorded by OHS. There will be a link to take you to a digital verification of vaccination. You may also use this as proof of vaccination. If you cannot locate the email or did not receive an email, please call OHS to have the email resent.

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.

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

Walgreens will provide Occupational Health with this information. It may take up to 2 weeks to get documented into our database. Once it is documented by OHS, you will receive a confirmation email.

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

[Flu clips](#) are available in the [Employee Health and Wellness Clinic \(EHWC\)](#) located in the Phipps Building, 3rd floor, Monday - Friday, 8am-3pm. You must provide proof of receiving your vaccine or already used the self-submit online tool. *If you received your vaccine at Walgreens, please wait until you receive the email confirmation or bring your receipt from the store.*



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.



All [Medical and Religious Exception Request forms](#) must be received no later **Nov. 10, 2020.**

How do I request an exception?

Medical

Personnel must submit a Request for [Medical Exception form](#) to Occupational Health Services. Occupational Health Services will evaluate the request.

Religious

The Johns Hopkins Hospital and Johns Hopkins Health System personnel must submit a [Religious Exception Request form](#) to the Office of Organizational Equity.

Phone: 410-614-1558 Fax: 410-367-2982 Email: EEOconcerns@jhmi.edu

Johns Hopkins University personnel must submit a [Religious Exception Request form](#) to the Office of Institutional Equity.

Phone: 410-516-8075 Fax: 410-516-5300 Email: OIE@jhu.edu

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. 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.

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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 have 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 will not be reportable to the Maryland Board of Physicians or the National Physician Data Base (NPDB).

Anyone granted a medical exception or religious accommodation are required wear a surgical mask within six feet of a patient during the influenza season. Those who fail to do so will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

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

To help managers and supervisors track compliance, an influenza vaccination status report has been created using the Tableau platform. This report will show you the names of all the staff in your department (based on SAP organizational unit) and their current compliance with the policy.



Note: access to the [Tableau reporting tool](#) is not automatic. If you do not have access, please email tableau@jhmi.edu or HSEinfo@jhmi.edu.

Link to Tableau: <https://tableau.jhmi.edu>

Direct link to report:

<https://tableau.jhmi.edu/#/site/JHMEnterpriseAnalytics/views/InfluenzaVaccinationDetailReport/FluVaccinationDetails>

MORE INFORMATION

Centers for Disease Control: cdc.gov/flu

Health, Safety and Environment: hopkinsmedicine.org/hse

Questions: MandatoryFluVaccine@jhmi.edu