Frequently Asked Questions About Onsite Flu Shot Clinics

Who is eligible to participate in the onsite flu shot clinic?

All employees are eligible to participate in the onsite flu shot clinic.

Who should not get a flu vaccine?

The following people should not get a flu vaccine:

* People with a severe allergy to chicken eggs.
* People who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination.
* Children younger than 6 months old (the vaccine is not approved for babies age group)
* People who have a moderate to severe illness with a fever (they should wait until they recover to get vaccinated).
* People with a history of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (a severe paralytic illness also known as GBS) that occurred after getting an influenza vaccine and who are not at risk for severe illness from influenza should generally not get the vaccine. Tell your doctor if you ever had GBS. Your doctor will help you decide if the vaccine is recommended for you.

How long will the vaccination take?

The flu shot administration will take approximately 5 minutes.

Where can I find information about which influenza strains are in this season’s vaccine?

Go to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website for detailed information about this season’s influenza vaccine. Because the flu vaccine changes each year based on which strains are circulating, visit the CDC’s seasonal flu page for the most updated information:

* <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm>

How long does it take for the vaccine to fully take effect?

The vaccine takes about 2 weeks to stimulate a full immune response in the body.

When should I get a flu shot?

Flu vaccines are typically available in the fall, and it is recommended to get the vaccine as soon as possible (usually October). However, you can still get protection from the flu by getting a flu shot later in the season, since flu cases normally peak in January or February in the Washington State.

Is the vaccine used thimerosal free?

No. The vaccine used at worksites is from multi-dose vials and these contain trace amounts of a preservative called thimerosal.

Washington State law requires pregnant women (and children under the age of three) get thimerosal-free vaccines. If you are pregnant, avoid the flu shot clinic at your worksite and talk to your doctor instead about getting the thimerosal-free vaccine.

Does the onsite clinic offer the nasal spray flu vaccination?

No.

Why is it important that individuals get a flu shot?

Each year, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu-related complications and about 36,000 people die of complications of the flu in the United States. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) influenza vaccination programs targeted to adults younger than 65 years of age have demonstrated reductions of:

* 34% - 44% Reduction in physician visits and insurance claims
* 32% - 45% Reduction in lost workdays

Are there any side effects to the flu vaccine?

For most people, there are no side effects to vaccination. Those receiving flu shots may suffer from redness, minor soreness, and pain at the injection site. Occasionally, people may have a low-grade fever and muscle aches for one to two days after the injection, but these symptoms are usually mild. Rarely, people may experience a severe allergic reaction.

Can an employee not covered by UMP or Group Health pay for the vaccine directly?

Yes, employees not covered by the participating health plans can get a flu shot and pay for it themselves. Wellness Coordinators should check with the flu shot clinic provider for what types of payment are accepted.

Does my agency have to contract for the service?

No, the Health Plans (UMP and Group Health) provide flu vaccine as a covered benefit. State agencies and higher education institutions work with a contracted provider that will bill the Health Plans directly for the service. Employees not enrolled in one of the Health Plans can pay for the service themselves. Discuss payment policy with the vendor you select.