

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NYC EMPLOYEE FREE FLU VACCINATION PROGRAM**

### **1. Why should I get flu vaccine?**

Influenza – the flu – is a serious disease. Every influenza season, anywhere from 3,000 to 49,000 people die from influenza and many people, even healthy people, become very ill. On average, there are over 200,000 hospitalizations each year in the United States due to influenza and its related complications. The flu vaccine is the best way to protect yourself and your family from getting influenza and spreading it to others.

### **2. How do I get flu vaccine?**

The flu shot is available at no cost to employees, pre-Medicare retirees, and dependents in 4 different ways:

**At the worksite:** Many of the city's agencies will be offering the flu vaccine to employees right at the worksite. City employees can receive the flu shot at the worksite no matter which New York City health plan coverage you have. Please watch for announcements about worksite clinics at your agency. You can visit <https://www.apschedule.com/nycflu> (username: nyc, password: flushot) or call 866-481-4391 to schedule your appointment.

**At the pharmacy:** City employees, pre-Medicare retirees, and their dependents can walk in to any participating pharmacy to receive a free flu shot. Check with your insurance provider to identify a participating pharmacy in your area and bring your insurance card to the pharmacy. You can use the NYC DOHMH flu locator to assist in finding a pharmacy at [nyc.gov/flu](http://nyc.gov/flu).

**At your physician's office:** City employees, pre-Medicare retirees, and dependents can visit an in-network physician to receive a flu vaccine. The visit co-pay will be waived when the sole purpose of going to the doctor is to get your flu vaccine. Contact your insurance provider for more information. To find a physician covered by your insurance, visit [zocdoc.com/nyc](http://zocdoc.com/nyc).

**At an ACPNY medical office:** City employees, pre-Medicare retirees, and their dependents can visit one of EmblemHealth's 36 AdvantageCare Physicians (ACPNY) medical offices to receive a free flu vaccine. Appointments can be made by phone (646-680-3000) or online at [www.acpny.com](http://www.acpny.com). You can receive your free flu vaccine at an ACPNY medical office no matter which New York City health plan coverage you have.

**3. How do I get free flu vaccine at an in-network doctor's office?**

The doctor's visit co-pay will be waived when the sole purpose of going to the doctor is to get your flu vaccine. Contact your insurance provider for more information. Primary care physicians are generally more likely to provide flu vaccine, but some specialists may also offer it. Check with your doctor. To find a physician covered by your insurance, visit [zocdoc.com/nyc](http://zocdoc.com/nyc).

**4. What should I bring with me to get my flu vaccine?**

Whether you get your flu vaccine at an in-network doctor's office, participating pharmacy, AdvantageCare Physicians (ACPNY) medical office, or at work, please bring both your employee ID and medical insurance card.

**5. What should I wear to make it easier to get the flu shot?**

The vaccine is administered in the upper arm, so wear short sleeves or clothing that allows for easy exposure of your upper arm/shoulder. There is privacy if you need to remove your shirt.

**6. What type of vaccine will you be providing?**

Trivalent vaccine will be administered at the worksite clinics. ACPNY locations will provide quadrivalent vaccine only. ACPNY clinics will also offer pediatric vaccines for children and high dose vaccines for those 65 years and older.

**7. Who needs two doses of flu vaccine?**

Some children will need two doses of flu vaccine for adequate protection from the flu. Children under 9 years who are getting vaccinated for the first time or who have only been vaccinated once before may require two vaccines, spaced at least 4 weeks apart. A pediatrician or health care provider can determine the appropriate flu vaccination schedule for your child.

**8. I got the flu vaccine and my health insurance sent me an “Explanation of Benefits.” Is this a bill?**

No, an explanation of benefits (EOB) is not a bill. An EOB tells you and your healthcare provider what portion of the provider's charges are eligible for benefits under your insurance plan.

**9. Can the flu vaccine cause influenza?**

No. Injectable flu vaccines do not contain a live virus and cannot cause influenza.

**10. When should I get flu vaccine?**

The vaccine starts to protect you after one to two weeks. Influenza is most common in the United States from December to March. It is best to get vaccinated in the fall but getting vaccinated anytime during influenza season provides beneficial protection. The City’s free flu vaccine program runs from 09/12/16 through 11/23/16.

**11. Why do I need to receive the flu vaccine every year?**

Influenza viruses are always changing and the flu vaccine generally provides protection for about one year. To maintain your protection, you need a new dose of vaccine each year. Vaccines are updated every season to protect against new viruses that are spreading in the community; this year’s vaccine was reformulated to match the strains expected to circulate. Getting immunized each year provides the best protection against influenza throughout influenza season. Even if a vaccine doesn't provide complete protection, people who are vaccinated tend to experience milder illness, and less hospitalization, than others.

**12. If I am pregnant, can I get the flu shot?**

Yes, pregnant women can receive the flu vaccine at any point in their pregnancy. Getting a flu shot is the first and most important step in protecting against flu. The flu shot given during pregnancy has been shown to protect both the mother and her baby (up to 6 months old) from

influenza. Talk with your obstetrician or health care provider first if you have any questions or concerns. Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/pregnant.htm> to learn more.

All pregnant women can receive their flu shot at their physician's office or an ACPNY medical office. Worksite clinics will only provide flu shots to pregnant women in their second and third trimesters.

**13. If I have a cold, can I get the flu shot?**

Yes, as long as your symptoms are mild you can get the vaccine. Mild illness with or without fever do not contraindicate getting flu vaccine.

**14. Why can't I get the nasal spray?**

Due to data showing poor or relatively lower effectiveness of the nasal spray, the CDC recommends that the nasal spray should not be used in the 2016-2017 flu season. Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2016/s0622-laiv-flu.html> to learn more.

**15. Is flu vaccine safe?**

Flu vaccines have been given for more than 50 years, and they have a very good safety track record. Flu vaccines are made the same way each year, and their safety is closely monitored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration. Hundreds of millions of flu vaccines have been given safely. Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/general.htm> to learn more.

**16. Are there any side effects to the flu shot?**

Common side effects include soreness, redness and swelling at the injection site, low fever and feeling achy and tired. Serious side effects are very rare. Ask your doctor if you have any concerns about side effects.