

# Flu Shots FAQs

## 1. **What is influenza and why do I need a vaccine?**

The flu, or influenza, is a contagious respiratory disease caused by the influenza virus. People who get the flu may experience fever, chills, headache, dry cough, muscle aches and may be sick for several days. Most people recover completely, but for some the flu may be especially severe, and pneumonia or other complications, including death, may develop. The types and strains of the influenza virus can change every year. The U.S. Public Health Service and the Center for Biologics Evaluation & Research of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration select the strains that have most recently caused influenza. It is recommended that you get a flu vaccine at the beginning of each flu season.

## 2. **Who is eligible?**

All AECOM employees and their spouses/domestic partners are eligible to receive a free flu vaccine in one of two ways:

- Use the **flu shot voucher** and take it to a local participating pharmacy between September 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021.
- Get a flu shot at your doctor's office. Although the flu shot itself is free, there may be an office visit copay.

No on-site flu shot clinics are currently planned for this flu season.

## 3. **Who should get a flu shot?**

According to the CDC, all people 6 months of age and older should get the flu vaccine, including healthy people and people with chronic medical conditions. Learn more on the **CDC website**.

There are some people who should not get a flu vaccine without first consulting a physician. These include:

- People who have a severe allergy to chicken eggs.
- People who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination.
- 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 called GBS) that occurred after receiving influenza vaccine and who are not at risk for severe illness from influenza should generally not receive vaccine.

## 4. **When can I get a flu shot?**

You may use a **flu shot voucher** and take it to a local participating pharmacy between September 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021. You can get a flu shot at your doctor's office whenever your doctor has them available. No on-site flu shot clinics are currently planned for this flu season.

## 5. **What if I am pregnant?**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the American College of Nurse-Midwives, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and many other organizations all strongly recommend a flu shot for pregnant women. We encourage you talk to your physician about receiving a flu shot during your prenatal visits.

## 6. **What should I wear to get a flu shot?**

Please wear clothing that enables easy access to the upper arm (i.e. short sleeves, loose-fitting shirt or layering with a tank top or undershirt). For men who wear dress shirts and ties, please loosen or remove tie prior to seeing the flu shot staff. You should be prepared to pull your shoulder out of your shirt, which may require you to unbutton your shirt.

## 7. **Where are the flu shots given?**

Flu vaccines are administered via intramuscular injection, which means the medication is injected into a muscle, and in this case, the deltoid muscle (the big muscle on your shoulder).

## 8. **How does the flu spread?**

Flu generally spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes, sending infectious droplets of moisture into the air for others to breathe. A person can also catch the flu by touching a surface where those droplets have fallen.

## 9. **Does the vaccine protect against all strains of the flu?**

No. There are many different strains of the flu virus, as well as other similar illnesses. Each year the U.S. Public Health Service and the Center for Biologics Evaluation & Research of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration select the strains that are most likely to cause illness during the upcoming season. The 2020-2021 quadrivalent vaccine for this flu season contains the following virus strains:

- A/Guangdong-Maonan/SWL1536/2019 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus
- A/Hong Kong/2671/2019 (H3N2)-like virus
- B/Washington/02/2019 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus
- B/Phuket/3073/2013 (B/Yamagata lineage)-like virus

## 10. **Will I get sick from the flu shot?**

The flu shot does not contain live viruses, so it cannot “give” you the flu. If you develop flu-like symptoms, it may be that you had already been exposed to the flu before receiving the vaccine. While the vaccine cannot stop the flu once it has begun, it may make symptoms less severe. Some people do experience mild side effects. The most common side effect is soreness at the vaccination site or possible a mild fever. These side effects usually last only 24 hours. There is a possibility, as with any vaccine or medication, that an allergic reaction or other serious reaction could occur.

## 11. **Is the flu shot safe?**

The flu shot is safe and effective. There are side effects to the flu shot, but these are very few and mild. The most common side effect is soreness in the arm where the shot was given. This usually lasts a few days and does not affect the arm function but will cause aching. Some people develop mild body aching and a very low-grade fever for a few days after the flu shot.

- 12. Do I need a flu shot every year?**  
To improve your chances of avoiding the flu, you need to get a flu shot every year. Scientists choose strains of the flu virus to include in the vaccine. This decision is based on international surveillance and what they determine will be circulating the following flu season. Antibodies that provide protection against the flu peak about two weeks after vaccination.
- 13. What is the flu shot voucher program?**  
The **flu shot voucher** program allows employees and spouses/domestic partners to print a flu shot voucher to get a free flu immunization at a local participating pharmacy. Flu shot vouchers are available September 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021.
- 14. How do I get a voucher?**  
Print the **flu shot voucher**. Fill in your name and six-digit employee ID (not your Workday ID) at the bottom of the voucher. Spouses/domestic partners can fill in the AECOM employee ID followed by an "S" – for example, 123456S.
- 15. Which pharmacies will accept the voucher?**  
The **flu shot voucher** program includes all major pharmacy chains (Walgreens, CVS, Walmart, Kroger, etc.) as well as nearly all independent pharmacies. Use the link on the **flu shot voucher** to search for a participating pharmacy using your city and state as the search criteria.
- 16. Do I need to make an appointment at the pharmacy?**  
Generally, appointments are not required, and you can simply walk in to receive the flu shot. Please check with your local pharmacy with updated COVID-19 policies and procedures.
- 17. How do I redeem the flu shot voucher?**  
Bring the **flu shot voucher** to a participating pharmacy, along with a photo ID, to get your free flu shot. Vouchers are redeemable September 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021. Be sure to confirm the pharmacy accepts the voucher prior to receiving your flu shot. Do not pay for the flu shot. If the pharmacy does not accept the voucher, identify alternative pharmacies or call the OptumRX Help Desk at 888.434.4358 x127. (OptumRX is the administrator of the flu shot voucher program).
- 18. What does the voucher cover?**  
The **flu shot voucher** covers the cost of a preservative-free vaccine (safe for pregnant women and children ages 10 and up) or seasonal flu vaccine (quadrivalent dose). Vaccines are subject to availability and the immunizing professional on duty.
- 19. How do I obtain proof of vaccination from the pharmacy?**  
If you require proof of vaccination, please be sure to request it from the pharmacy at the time you receive your flu shot.