



## Frequently Asked Questions: Flu Shots and Employee Clinics

### Table of Contents

[General questions about influenza \(also known as the flu\)](#)

[Employee clinics](#)

[Eligibility](#)

[Minnesota Advantage Health Plan ID](#)

[Administration of seasonal flu vaccines](#)

### General questions

#### Where can I find basic information about the flu?

These government websites provide information about the flu:

- [Minnesota Department of Health \(MDH\)](#)
- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)

#### If COVID-19 is spreading in my community, should I still go out to get a flu shot?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), you should still get your flu shot. Getting an annual flu shot is an essential part of protecting you and your family's health. When going to get your vaccine, follow CDC's recommendations for protecting your health, including wearing a mask. Please note, you should also follow the COVID-19 safety protocols your agency/worksites has in place.

[Back to the Table of Contents](#)

## Employee clinics

### What types of vaccine are used to protect us from the seasonal flu?

There are two different ways the vaccine is delivered:

- [Flu shot](#): an inactivated influenza vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle.
- [FluMist \(nasal spray\)](#): a live, attenuated influenza flu vaccine (LAIV) that is sprayed into the nose.

### What seasonal flu vaccines are available our worksite clinics?

The flu shot is the primary vaccine available at our worksite clinics; limited supply of the FluMist or High-Dose vaccine for seniors may be available. The flu shot provides protection against four flu viruses. If you have any questions about whether you should get a flu shot, consult your health care provider. Additional information is also available at [from the CDC](#).

### What are my options if I miss our worksite flu clinics?

Seasonal flu shots are available through your primary care clinic and many in-network convenience clinics or pharmacies. Prior to attending a community flu vaccination event (i.e., pharmacy or grocery store) call member services at your health plan and to confirm it is covered at that location.

### What flu viruses does this season's vaccine protect against in the U.S.?

There are many flu viruses that constantly change. The composition of flu vaccines for the U.S. is reviewed annually and updated to match circulating flu viruses. Flu vaccines protect against the three or four viruses (depending on vaccine) that research suggests will be most common.

Our employee flu clinics follow the 2021-2022 recommendations. The four-component egg-based vaccine helps cover:

- an A/Victoria/2570/2019 (H1N1) pdm09-like virus;
- an A/Cambodia/e0826360/2020 (H3N2)-like virus;
- a B/Washington/02/2019- like virus (B/Victoria lineage);
- a B/Phuket/3073/2013-like virus (B/Yamagata lineage)

For additional information visit: [CDC Frequently Asked Questions Vaccine Composition](#)

## Is the seasonal flu vaccine produced using eggs?

Yes, the seasonal flu vaccine is produced using eggs. If you have an egg allergy, please refer to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendations for [flu vaccine and egg allergies](#). If you have questions about whether you should get a seasonal flu shot consult your health care provider.

## Is a thimerosal-free vaccine available?

The flu vaccines offered at our clinics are thimerosal-free. No latex products are used at our employee clinics.

## Where can I get a flu shot at work?

This year, we are hosting two different types of employee clinics.

- **Worksite Specific Clinics** are for all employees working in the building. If you are teleworking, check with your agency about how to plan a visit to your worksite. Ask about what you need to know to plan for your visit to the worksite. Be aware of your agencies COVID-19 emergency preparedness guidelines and health screenings.
- **All Employee and Family Clinics** are open to any state employee and their family members. Please be sure to follow all COVID-19 guidelines required for the site you select.

If you attend any worksite clinic you may have to check-in at security or an information area and complete a COVID-19 health screening assessment. [Find upcoming clinics using this search tool](#).

## Will I have to pay for my worksite flu vaccination?

Without an Advantage ID card, the flu shot will cost \$35, \$40 FluMist, \$65 Senior High-Dose (cash only; please bring exact amount as the nurses do not have change).

[Back to the Table of Contents](#)

## Eligibility

### Are temporary employees eligible to attend clinics?

Yes, however, they need to pay in cash. The flu shot is \$35 for individuals whose insurance does not cover the vaccine. Please bring the exact amount of cash, and your insurance card, if applicable.

### Are new employees eligible?

New employees who have enrolled in the Minnesota Advantage Health Plan and have their insurance member card are eligible. New employees who are not covered by insurance must pay \$35 for their vaccination (*cash only*; please bring exact amount as the nurses do not have change). To avoid out-of-pocket expenses, we recommend newly covered employees who do not have their insurance ID card receive their vaccination elsewhere.

## **Are family members allowed to participate?**

This year immediate family members of current employees can participate *only* at the All Employee and Family Clinics. If you attend any worksite clinic you may have to check-in at security or an information area and complete a COVID-19 health screening assessment. No child under the age of 3 years old can receive a flu vaccination at our clinics; please take these children to your primary care provider.

## **We are an educational facility. Can students participate?**

No, our flu shot clinics are for employees only. Select clinics, listed as All Employee and Family Clinics, are also open to the immediate family members of our employees. If you work at an educational facility, please encourage students to get their vaccine at their primary care provider or at a public flu vaccination clinic.

## **Are clinics available to retirees?**

No, we are not offering flu shots to retirees. They can receive the shot through their primary care clinic or local pharmacy.

## **Since clinics are being offered during work time. What are the implications under Worker's Compensation in the event of adverse reaction?**

There is no Workers' Compensation liability for an adverse reaction to the seasonal flu shot, even when given in the workplace. Seasonal flu vaccination is a voluntary activity.

[Back to the Table of Contents](#)

## **Minnesota Advantage Health Plan ID**

### **How do I know if my insurance card is an "Advantage" card?**

If you are enrolled in the state's insurance program, your health insurance card is an Advantage card. The name of our health plan is the Minnesota Advantage Health Plan; and you can choose who administers the plan for you: BlueCross BlueShield, HealthPartners or PreferredOne. Your administrator provides you with your insurance card, and Advantage is listed on them.

The cards are issued by each health plan on behalf of the state, but they all have the name "Advantage" on them.

### **I have misplaced my Minnesota Advantage Health Plan card. What should I do?**

You can always access a copy of your insurance ID card by logging into your health plan administrator's member portal. You can also contact them to have a new ID card sent to you.

- [BlueCross BlueShield of Minnesota](#): call 651-662-5090 or 800-262-0819
- [HealthPartners](#): call 952-883-7900 or 888-343-4404

- [PreferredOne](#): call 763-847-4477 or 800-997-1750

### **I don't have a health insurance card; can someone vouch for me?**

You will need your health insurance ID number for billing purposes. Please make every effort to get your ID card before the clinic date.

### **I know my health insurance ID number, is that good enough?**

No, you will need your health insurance ID number to minimize errors during the billing process.

[Back to the Table of Contents](#)

## **Administration of seasonal flu vaccines**

### **Who are the vaccinations administered by?**

The three health plans contract with a service provider, Homeland Health Specialists, Inc. ("Homeland"). Homeland is licensed with the state of Minnesota and credentialed with the health plans. All state employee workplace vaccination clinics are led by licensed Registered Nurses and follow federal and state of Minnesota regulations. All work is performed according to established medical protocols for vaccine administration, vaccine handling and storage, and emergency response.

Homeland operates under the supervision of its medical director, Sean P. Flood, MD MPH. Dr. Flood is a graduate of the University of Minnesota Medical School and is Board certified in Family Practice, Preventative Medicine and Occupational Medicine. Dr. Flood also holds a master's degree in Public Health. His career is focused on community and preventative medicine with the intent of fostering prevention and healthier lifestyles as primary strategies for promoting healthy communities. In addition to his duties with Homeland, Dr. Flood practices Occupational Medicine at Hudson Physicians in Hudson, WI.

### **Is the seasonal flu shot free at our worksite clinics?**

Yes, the seasonal flu shot vaccine are provided at no out-of-pocket cost to employees and covered dependents at our clinics. It is a covered benefit provided by the Minnesota Advantage Health Plan. You will have to provide proof of insurance coverage at the workplace clinics.

### **What forms will I be asked to complete before being vaccinated?**

You will complete a combined consent and insurance form. [Access the consent form](#); complete it ahead of time to minimize your time spent at the clinic.

## **Do I need to do anything to prepare for the shot?**

Shots are administered to the upper part of the arm. Wear clothing that will give easy access to your upper arm. After receiving your shot, stay nearby in the building for at least 15 minutes in case you experience any reactions.

## **Some state agencies have their own nurses on staff. Why don't we use them to administer the shots?**

Because the flu shots are considered a covered preventative benefit under our health plans, the health plans are responsible for providing them for members. We use the nursing vendor that the three health plans contract with to administer the shots to employees statewide. Using state nurses would add to scheduling complexity and compensation/reimbursement and liability issues.