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Section 1: Flu Season Vaccine Information

1. When does flu season normally begin and end, and when is it expected to peak?

The timing of flu is difficult to predict and can vary in different parts of the country and from season to season. In our area, though, most flu activity peaks in December and January.

2. What viruses will the 2020-2021 flu vaccine protect against?

For 2020-2021, trivalent (three-component) egg-based vaccines are recommended to contain:

- A/Guangdong-Maonan/SWL1536/2019 (H1N1)pdm09-like virus (updated)
- A/Hong Kong/2671/2019 (H3N2)-like virus (updated)
- B/Washington/02/2019 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus (updated)
- Quadrivalent (four-component) egg-based vaccines, which protect against a second lineage of B viruses, are recommended to contain:
 - The three recommended viruses above, plus B/Phuket/3073/2013-like (Yamagata lineage) virus.
- About 2 weeks after vaccination, antibodies that provide protection against Influenza virus infection develop in the body.

3. Are there side effects of the flu vaccine?

Flu vaccines are safe. Serious problems from a flu vaccine are very rare. The most common side effect that a person is likely to experience is soreness where the injection was given. This is generally mild and usually goes away after a day or two. Visit [Influenza Vaccine Safety](#) for more information.

4. What should I do if I feel sick after being vaccinated?

Stay home, contact your leader and call Employee Health at 832.824.2150, option 4.

5. Where can I find more information about this year's flu vaccine?

Please [click here](#) to view the vaccine information statement provided by the CDC. Information is also available in Spanish; [click here](#) to view.

Section 2: Flu and COVID-19

1. What is Influenza (also called flu)?

Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by Influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year.

2. What's the difference between the flu and COVID-19?

Influenza (Flu) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. COVID-19 is caused by infection with a new coronavirus (called SARS-CoV-2) and flu is caused by infection with [Influenza viruses](#). Because some of the symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are similar, it may be hard to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone, and testing may be needed to help confirm a diagnosis. Flu and COVID-19 share many characteristics, but there are some key differences between the two. For more details on the differences between flu and COVID-19, go to <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm>



3. Will a flu vaccine protect me against COVID-19?

No, getting a flu vaccine will not protect against COVID-19; however, flu vaccination has many other important benefits. Flu vaccines have been shown to reduce the risk of flu illness, hospitalization and death. Getting a flu vaccine this fall will be more important than ever, not only to reduce your risk from flu, but also to help conserve potentially scarce health care resources.

4. Can I get a flu vaccine if I have COVID-19 symptoms? Should I get a flu vaccine if I'm not feeling well?

No. Vaccination should be deferred (postponed) for people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, regardless of whether they have symptoms, until they have met the criteria to discontinue their isolation. While mild illness does not make a flu vaccination inadvisable, vaccination visits for these people should be postponed to avoid exposing health care personnel and other patients to the virus that causes COVID-19. When scheduling or confirming appointments for vaccination, patients should be instructed to notify the provider's office or clinic in advance if they currently have or develop any symptoms of COVID-19.

5. Can I have flu and COVID-19 at the same time?

Although unusual, co-infection with the influenza and SARS-CoV-2 (i.e., COVID-19) virus can occur. Health experts are still studying how common this can be. Some of the symptoms of flu and COVID-19 are similar, making it hard to tell the difference between them based on symptoms alone. Diagnostic testing can help determine if you are sick with flu or COVID-19.

6. Can I get a flu vaccine if I have tested positive for COVID-19?

Yes, but only if you have met the criteria for discontinuing isolation. Additionally, a prior infection with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 or flu does not protect someone from future flu infections. The best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated every year.

7. Can I get a flu vaccine if I have been exposed to COVID-19? What if another member of my household has COVID-19, can I get a flu vaccine?

You should only get a flu vaccine once you have met all criteria for either discontinuing home isolation or quarantine and remain without symptoms.

8. I potentially could have been exposed to COVID-19, can I receive my flu vaccine?

You should only get a flu vaccine once you have met all criteria for either discontinuing home isolation or quarantine and remain without symptoms.

9. If I receive my flu vaccine in September and then I contract COVID-19 in October, do I need to be vaccinated for the flu again after I recover?

No, unless the CDC posts new recommendations.

10. How does the flu spread?

Flu viruses spread mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people infected with influenza. Sometimes, people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to five days after becoming sick. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.

11. What are symptoms of flu?

Symptoms of flu include:

- fever (unusually high)/chills
- fatigue
- headache
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- muscle aches
- vomiting and diarrhea also can occur but are more common in children than adults



12. What are complications of flu?

Complications of flu can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes.

Section 3: Flu Program at Texas Children's

1. Who is eligible for the flu vaccine at Texas Children's?

Texas Children's employees, Baylor College of Medicine employees working at Texas Children's facilities, Morrison, Crothall and Compass contract employees, and volunteers at Texas Children's.

2. What are the options for getting my flu vaccine this year?

Below are five ways to receive the flu vaccine this year.

- **On-Site Events:** These will be held at multiple locations across the organization, with some events taking place at or nearby employee screening locations. Workforce members can also [schedule one-on-one appointments](#) to get their flu shot at the Medical Center, West and The Woodlands campuses.
- **Car-Side Events:** Workforce members will be able to [schedule appointments](#) at the Meyer Building garage in the Medical Center, the West Campus garage and The Woodlands garage.
- **Texas Children's Pediatrics with your Child:** Employees whose child or children receive care through our TCP practices will be eligible to receive their flu vaccine on site during their child's visit.
- **Primary Care Provider (PCP):** The flu vaccine is covered at 100 percent through Texas Children's medical plans when administered at your PCP's office.
- **Retail Pharmacies:** The flu vaccine is covered at 100 percent through Texas Children's medical plans when administered by an in-network pharmacy.

For more details, please visit texaschildrensbenefits.org/flu.

3. Why do I need to get a flu vaccine earlier this year (September)?

September is the usual start date for administering flu vaccinations in the United States. While the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has not yet voted on the flu vaccine recommendations for 2020-2021, CDC does not anticipate a major change in the recommendation on timing of vaccinations. Getting vaccinated in July or August is considered too early, but beginning in September is a good time to get vaccinated.

4. What steps are being taken this year to mitigate contact while I'm getting a flu vaccine on site?

- Touchless registration and attestation
- Social distancing at vaccination locations
- Multiple vaccination locations and times
- Appointments will be available
- Car-side vaccinations

5. I am working from home, so I am not putting Texas Children's patients or employees in danger. Why do I need to get my flu vaccine this year?

For the upcoming flu season, flu vaccinations will be very important to reduce flu because it can help reduce the overall impact of respiratory illnesses on the population and, thus, lessen the resulting burden on the health care system during the COVID-19 pandemic. A flu vaccine may also provide several individual health benefits, including keeping you from getting sick with flu, reducing the severity of your illness if you do get the flu and reducing your risk of a flu-associated hospitalization during the COVID-19 pandemic.



6. What happens if I refuse to get vaccinated?

Employees who decline the flu vaccine for approved exemptions will be required to use protective medical equipment, such as gloves and masks, when providing direct patient care services for the duration of the flu season. For more details, see [Required Influenza Vaccination Policy #317](#) and [Procedure #4218](#).

7. Will employees at Texas Children's Pediatrics, Texas Children's Urgent Care, and Texas Children's Specialty Care Centers be vaccinated at their respective practices as in years past? Yes, employees at Texas Children's Pediatrics, Texas Children's Urgent Care and Texas Children's Specialty Care Centers will be vaccinated at their respective practices with the support of Employee Health.

8. What does Texas Children's medical insurance cover if I don't want to come on site or go to a drive-thru event?

If you are enrolled in a Texas Children's medical plan with Cigna, your flu vaccine is covered at 100% at your provider's office or any local retail pharmacy. If you get the vaccine outside of Texas Children's, you need to upload proof of vaccination via texaschildrensbenefits.org/flu

There are two ways to locate a participating pharmacy:

1. Sign in at Express-Scripts.com and click Prescriptions, then Find a Pharmacy to search for in-network pharmacies convenient for you. You can also log in to Express-Scripts through texaschildrensbenefits.org
2. Call the number on your Express Scripts member ID card to find a participating pharmacy near you.

9. If I receive my flu vaccine outside Texas Children's, how and by when do I need to submit proof? Team members who receive their flu vaccine outside of Texas Children's are to submit an attestation and proof of vaccination to Employee Health by December 30, 2020, via texaschildrensbenefits.org/flu.

10. Who can I call if I have questions about this year's Flu Program?

Employees with questions can call the Employee Health Call Center at 832-824-2150, Option 5.

11. If I am working remotely, can I still get my flu vaccine at Texas Children's?

Yes, Employee Health highly encourages employees working remotely, and volunteers who do not have to come on site, to get their flu vaccine at one of Texas Children's car-side vaccination events. To schedule a car-side appointment, [click here](#).

12. What if I answer yes to any of the questions on the Consent Form?

If you answer yes to being pregnant, then you must provide a note from your PCP or OB/GYN at the on-site or car-side flu shot event recommending that you receive your flu shot. The nurse will keep the note on record. If you answer yes to any other question on the Consent Form, TCH recommends that you get your flu shot from your provider.