



Influenza Vaccine FAQs

Who should get the flu vaccine? The influenza vaccine is recommended for everyone over the age of 6 months. The flu vaccine is the best way to prevent getting the flu. We recommend getting the flu shot as soon as it's available, usually in September or October.

Who shouldn't get the "regular" flu vaccine?

- Patients with a history of significant egg allergy (anaphylaxis) should take the egg-free vaccine. This will need to be arranged at the Student Health Center after an office visit and is not be an option at mass vaccine events
- Those who have had a significant allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to past flu shots should not be vaccinated at a mass vaccine event and should discuss vaccination individually with his/her healthcare provider at an appointment.
- Those with a history of Guillain-Barre should discuss vaccination individually with his/her healthcare provider and should not receive vaccination at a mass vaccination event.

Is the flu shot free for students? YES!! Free flu shots are available at Flulapalooza and "Boo to the Flu". Flulapalooza is a campus-wide mass vaccination event held every fall. This year, Flulapalooza VIII is Wednesday, September 26th from 6 am until 6 pm- --- this is held between Light Hall and the VA Hospital. Student Health will host "Boo to the Flu" on Tuesday, October 30th from 5-7 p.m. at the Student Health Center.

What if I can't attend Flulapalooza? Flulapalooza is the most efficient way to get your shot, as significant resources are dedicated to mass vaccination and short wait-times on that day. However, we understand that not all students can attend that event. Free flu shots are also available on a walk-in basis (no appointment needed) at the Student Health Center from 8 am until 4 pm Monday-Friday.

What is the high dose influenza vaccine?

- The "regular" dose of influenza vaccine has been shown to be less effective than "high dose" for those 65 and older. So the high dose vaccine is currently recommended for patients older than 65 and "regular" dose is recommended for those under age 65
- The "high dose" influenza vaccines are available at Flulapalooza
- Student Health can order high dose influenza vaccine for patients over age 65

What other options are there? I'm afraid of needles! The FluMist nasal vaccine is no longer recommended as an acceptable alternative to injectable vaccines. It has much lower effectiveness and protection against influenza, so Flumist is not available at Student Health or the Vanderbilt University Medical Center, so this means it's not available at Flulapalooza.

There is an intradermal vaccine that has a smaller needle. The intradermal shot is not available at the Student Health Center or at mass vaccine events on campus but may be available at local retail clinics close to campus. This vaccine option is more expensive than the regular injectable vaccines (and the small needle still hurts!) but may be preferable for those who do not want an intramuscular shot.