



Flu Shot Program: Gold Standard for Health

Why do I need to get an influenza (flu) vaccine?

Sun Health requires all **team members and contract personnel** to receive the flu vaccine or obtain an approved medical or religious exemption on file with Human Resources by **11:59 p.m. (MST), October 31, 2021**. We believe this is the right thing to do to protect our residents, team members and contract personnel in a healthcare setting. The flu can be prevented and immunization is a very effective way to decrease the spread of the virus.

The flu vaccine only protects against some strains of flu, so why require it?

Sun Health is offering a Quadrivalent vaccine this year, which means it protects against four strains of the flu. In addition, it also provides some cross-protection for other strains and may lead to less severe illness, if exposed. The vaccine is formulated each year to match the strains of flu that are likely to be transmitted.

Receiving the flu shot, documentation

I'm a Sun Health team member. Where can I receive my flu vaccine?

Sun Health will provide the flu vaccine to team members. Watch for additional information to be posted by timeclocks and on the Sun Health Employee Portal under HR Center > Team Member Flu Shot Program.

If you decide not to receive your flu shot at Sun Health, you will need to submit proof of vaccination or an approved exemption form by **11:59 p.m. (MST), October 31, 2021** via one of the following:

- A note from your doctor that states you've received your flu vaccine
- Proof of vaccination from another location (CVS, Walgreens, Fry's Pharmacy, etc.)
- **Only FDA-approved flu vaccines will be accepted**

Proof of vaccination must be presented to your local HR representative, or e-mailed to HRSupport@sunhealth.org. This information will be maintained in your team member file.

I got a flu shot at my doctor's office, am I considered compliant if I can prove I got the shot before October 31, 2021?

Yes, if you've submitted proof and documentation of your immunization by the **11:59 p.m. (MST), October 31, 2021** deadline. If you had the flu shot before the deadline but fail to submit proof by that date, you will be subject to corrective action, unpaid administrative leave, and then termination if non-compliant after **Noon, November 1, 2021**.

If I choose to get the shot from my own doctor, will Sun Health pay for it or for my co-pay/deductible?

Sun Health will accept documentation of an individual receiving a flu shot from any provider. If you have Sun Health medical insurance, then your usual fees will apply to receiving this service. Sun Health will not, as part of its Team Member Flu Shot Program, provide additional monies for team members to receive flu vaccine outside of the free offerings through Sun Health.

Flu vaccination exemptions, masking and compliance

What is the process for obtaining a medical or religious exemption?

Both medical and religious exemption request forms can be found on the [Sun Health Employee Portal](#) under HR Center > Team Member Flu Shot Program.

Medical exemptions must be signed by the person requesting the exemption and the person's primary care physician (MD, DO or Nurse Practitioner). Religious exemptions must be signed by the individual requesting the exemption.



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Both medical and religious exemption requests must be turned into Human Resources or scanned and emailed to HRSupport@sunhealth.org. This must be done by **11:59 p.m. (MST), October 31, 2021**, to be considered compliant.

Those persons with an approved medical or religious exemption will be required to wear a mask while in any resident's home or onsite in any Sun Health location, except while eating in a break room or in an office if no one else is present during the official flu season, through March 31, 2022 – end date subject to extension.

What if I choose not to be immunized or do not have an approved medical or religious exemption by October 31, 2021?

Compliance is an expectation of employment at Sun Health because of the health benefits it provides to you and anyone you come in contact with. If you fail to be immunized, submit proof of immunization, or do not have an approved exemption by **11:59 p.m. (MST), October 31, 2021** you will be unable to work as of **Noon, November 1, 2021**. At this time, all team members and contract personnel who have not received their flu vaccination or obtained an acceptable exemption will be removed from the schedule.

- Team members will remain off the schedule with no pay and will have until **Noon (MST), November 6, 2021** to bring verification of a flu shot or exemption. If one has not been received, all non-compliant team members will be terminated for flu shot/exemption non-compliance.
- Contracted personnel will not be able to return to Sun Health until they are compliant with policy.

What if I have an exemption and I'm not following masking guidelines outlined?

The first time an exempted team member or contractor is observed not following the masking guidelines, leaders will remind them of the requirement and let them know they are in violation of the flu policy expectations. If the manager identifies the team member or contractor has another occurrence of not following the expectations, the leader will partner with Human Resources to take the following actions.

- For Team members: Follow established corrective action guidelines for team members. Corrective action could be accelerated, as we do with any other performance concern, depending on the team member's behaviors and prior performance.
- For Contract Personnel: Take them off the schedule and reach out to the contract company for further actions.

Why do I need to wear a mask?

While influenza immunization is a very effective way to prevent the flu, some people cannot receive the flu shot due to medical or religious reasons. The flu virus can be spread before you feel sick. Wearing an approved mask during flu season when in facilities with patients, protects the patient in the event you have the flu virus and protects you from getting the flu from sick patients.

I am returning from a leave of absence after the November 1, 2021 deadline. What are the expectations for my return?

Any team member or contract personnel returning from a leave of absence will continue to need a release to return to work, which now includes receiving a flu exemption or flu shot. During the return to work visit, Human Resources will screen for flu immunization. The returning team member can choose to be immunized by a Resident Services team member, provide documentation of outside immunization or apply for a medical or religious exemption. The team member or contractor will be given seven days from their release from their treating physician to decide how they wish to comply but will not be cleared to return to work unless compliant.



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If the team member declines the flu shot, or fails to receive an approved medical or religious exemption when going through this process with Sun Health after the seven-day window, it will be considered their voluntary separation of employment from Sun Health.

Where can I get more information?

Visit the [Sun Health Employee Portal](#) > HR Center > Team Member Flu Shot Program for more information.

Influenza and Vaccination facts

What is the flu?

The flu virus is contagious and easily spread by coughing, sneezing or nasal secretions. While anyone can get the flu, rates of infection are higher for some than others. Flu symptoms typically last a few days and include fever/chills, cough, sore throat, muscle aches, fatigue, cough, headache and a runny or stuffy nose.

Young children, people 65 years of age and older, pregnant women and people with conditions such as heart, lung or kidney disease or a weakened immune system can get sicker. Flu can cause fever and pneumonia and make existing medical conditions worse. Thousands of people die annually from the flu and even more require hospitalization. By getting an influenza vaccination, you can protect yourself, patients and family members from the flu, thus limiting the spread of the virus.

When does flu season occur?

Flu season can vary depending on where you live and from year to year. Generally, flu season runs from December through March.

What is the difference between quadrivalent and trivalent vaccines?

From the Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

- **Trivalent:** There are hundreds of A-strains that are mutating constantly and hard to predict, while there are only two B-strains. The trivalent vaccine protects against three different flu viruses: the two most common A strains (H1N1 and H3N2) and one B strain (either Massachusetts or Brisbane), whichever is predicted to affect citizens most strongly in a given year.
- **Quadrivalent:** This form offers the same benefits as the trivalent vaccine, with the added bonus of covering both B-strains, so four strains total. Experts see this as beneficial since both B-strains have been detected within the United States in the past 10 years.
- **Senior-Dose Trivalent:** As we age, our immune system weakens, which means the antibody response after getting the traditional flu shot isn't as high as it used to be. Senior-dose vaccine is made for people 65+ and helps promote a stronger immune response to the flu.

Can I get the flu and COVID vaccines at the same time, or should I wait for a time in-between shots?

Sun Health's medical director, Dr. Lakshmipathy, per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), confirms individuals can receive a COVID-19 vaccine and a flu vaccine at the same time. For those who prefer to get one vaccine at a time, Dr. L recommends spacing them out by 2 weeks. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your supervisor.

The vaccine is latex, egg and preservative free. No antibiotics are used in the manufacturing process.



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Can I get the flu by getting vaccinated?

No, you cannot get the flu from the vaccine because the flu shot does not contain live viruses. After getting the shot, mild symptoms such as mild soreness, redness, or swelling at the injection site can occur. A headache or low-grade fever may occur as well.

Are there any risks from getting the vaccine?

After getting the shot, mild symptoms such as soreness, redness, or swelling at the injection site can occur. A headache or low-grade fever may occur as well. As with any medicine, there is the potential for problems such as severe allergic reactions. Life-threatening allergic reactions are very rare. If a severe reaction occurs, call a doctor immediately. Team members who may be experiencing a severe reaction to the flu vaccine may present to the Emergency Department or Urgent Care.

Are there people who should not get the vaccine?

Yes, those with severe (life-threatening) allergies. Allergic reactions to influenza vaccine, however, are rare. Be sure to let your doctor know if you have ever had a severe reaction after a dose of influenza vaccine. Those who have had Guillain-Barre' syndrome should also let their doctor know.

I am allergic to latex, can I be immunized?

The vaccine we are using is preservative and latex free, as it has been in years past.

I am allergic to eggs. Can I be immunized?

Yes, based on the CDC's recommendations this year:

- Persons with a history of egg allergy who have experienced only hives after exposure to egg should receive flu vaccine. Any licensed and recommended flu vaccine that is otherwise appropriate for the recipient's age and health status may be used.
- Persons who report having had reactions to egg involving symptoms other than hives, such as angioedema, respiratory distress, lightheadedness, or recurrent emesis; or who required epinephrine or another emergency medical intervention, may similarly receive any licensed and recommended flu vaccine that is otherwise appropriate for the recipient's age and health status. The selected vaccine should be administered in an inpatient or outpatient medical setting (including, but not necessarily limited to hospitals, clinics, health departments, and physician offices). Vaccine administration should be supervised by a health care provider who is able to recognize and manage severe allergic conditions.