



## Frequently Asked Questions

### Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association/Kettering Health Network Mandatory Influenza Vaccination Program

The Greater Dayton Area Hospital Association (GDAHA) has recommended that all hospitals in our area require flu vaccination for their employees. In 2012, Kettering Health Network agreed to accept the recommendations for all employees.

#### Flu Information for 2019-2020

Thank you for protecting our patients through your participation in the KHN Employee Flu Vaccine Campaign. Getting an annual flu vaccine is the first and best way to protect yourself, your family, and our patients from the flu. Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctors' visits, missed work and school due to the flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations. The more people who get vaccinated, the more people will be protected from the flu, including older people, very young children, pregnant women, and people with certain health conditions who are more vulnerable to serious flu complications.

In addition to getting vaccinated, you and your loved ones can take everyday preventative actions like staying away from sick people and washing your hands to reduce the spread of germs. **If you are sick with the flu, stay home from work to prevent spreading the virus to others. Please note that you will need to clear through Employee Health following your illness, prior to returning to work.**

#### 1. Is the vaccine safe?

**Flu vaccines are among the safest medical products in use. Hundreds of millions of Americans have safely received flu vaccines over the past 50 years, and there has been extensive research supporting the safety of flu vaccines.**

- A flu vaccine is the first and best way to reduce your chances of getting the flu and spreading it to others. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older receives a flu vaccine every year.
- Like any medical product, vaccines can cause side effects. Side effects of the flu vaccine are generally mild and go away on their own within a few days.

Common side effects from the flu shot include:

- Soreness, redness, and/or swelling from the shot
- Headache
- Fever
- Nausea
- Muscle aches

The flu shot, like other injections, can occasionally cause fainting.

Any reaction or side effect directly related to the flu shot that requires medical care needs to be reported to Employee Health for evaluation.

#### 2. What type of vaccine is offered?

- At our facilities, we offer a quadrivalent inactivated vaccine (QIV)
- KHN offers a flu vaccine product that is:
  - Egg-free
  - Latex-free
  - Preservative-free (includes Thimerisol)
  - Antibiotic-free

### **3. Can the vaccine cause the flu?**

- Flu vaccines work by helping the body's defenses in the event that a person is exposed to the flu virus.
- Flu shots contain dead viruses that do not make you sick.
- It takes about two to three weeks after receiving the flu vaccine to develop full immunity, so it is possible for a person to get the flu right after they got their flu vaccine.

### **4. When should I get my flu vaccine?**

- By **Monday, November 1, 2019**. Flu vaccines will be made available on the KHN campuses, starting Tuesday, October 1, 2019.
- If you have any questions about the mandatory flu vaccine, talk to your manager or supervisor, or contact the Employee Health Department.

### **5. Why do I need to get vaccinated against the flu every year?**

- **A vaccine made against flu viruses going around last year may not protect against a new virus that is going around.** That's why the flu vaccine is updated every year to include current viruses.

### **6. Why is the flu vaccine Required?**

- Like hand washing, receiving the flu vaccine is something health care workers can do every year to prevent spreading the virus to our patients and other co-workers.
- Kettering Health Network has adopted the policy requiring that all staff receive the flu vaccine or be exempted due to an approved medical reason or religious belief.
- Compliance with mandatory vaccination will be required by all health care personnel by **November 1, 2019**. Health care personnel who fail to be vaccinated or to have an approved exemption by **November 1, 2019** will receive a final written warning.
- Termination will occur if the vaccine is not completed within 10 days from the final written warning.

### **7. I don't work in a clinical area. Why do I need the flu vaccine?**

- Health care personnel that do not directly take care of patients may still interact with employees that do and can spread the virus to them. We are a health care organization; we *all* have a responsibility to stop the transmission of the flu.

## **8. What will you accept as proof if I am receiving the flu vaccine from another employer/facility/drug store?**

- We will accept written proof from the provider who gave the flu vaccine with the date, your name, type, and site that you received the vaccine included on it. Documentation can be sent to [KHNFluCampaign@ketteringhealth.org](mailto:KHNFluCampaign@ketteringhealth.org)
- KHN will accept off-site documentation of receipt of the flu vaccination administered no earlier than August 1, 2019.

## **9. What if I have an allergy to the vaccine?**

- We will allow medical exemptions following CDC guidelines, which state the following people should not be vaccinated with flu vaccine:
  - People who have had a severe, documented allergy to a previous flu vaccine.
  - People who have developed Guillian-Barré syndrome within six weeks following a flu vaccine should consult with their physician.

## **10. What if I have an egg allergy?**

- Vaccine product is available through KHN that is egg-free and can be administered to anyone over the age of four.

## **11. What about other serious reactions?**

- Serious reactions to the vaccine are very rare. Such reactions are most likely the result of an allergy to a vaccine component.
- In 1976, the swine flu (injectable) vaccine was associated with a severe illness called Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS), a nerve condition that can result in temporary paralysis. Injectable influenza vaccines since then have not been clearly linked with GBS, because the disease is so rare it is difficult to obtain a precise estimate of any increase in risk. However, as a precaution, any person with/without a high-risk medical condition who previously experienced GBS within six weeks of an influenza vaccination should generally not be vaccinated.

## **12. How do I obtain a medical exemption for the influenza vaccine?**

- If a true medical exemption is present, you will need to contact the Employee Health department to receive a copy of the medical exemption form. The forms will also be available on the KHN Intranet at each campus's Employee Health website.
- You will need to take the form to your health care provider and have them complete the form.

- The completed form should be sent to [KHNFluCampaign@ketteringhealth.org](mailto:KHNFluCampaign@ketteringhealth.org) and will either be immediately approved or sent to the Employee Influenza Vaccine Exemption Committee for review. This form will be placed in your Employee Health file.
- Medical exemptions must be received no later than **October 1 of every year**.

### **13. Why can't I just decline the vaccine and wear a mask?**

- Declining the vaccine is not an option if you want to continue employment at Kettering Health Network.
- The best way to prevent getting the flu is to be vaccinated. Wearing a droplet mask is not a replacement for vaccination.

### **14. Is it safe for pregnant women to get influenza vaccine?**

- Yes. In fact, vaccination with the flu shot is recommended for women who will be pregnant during the flu season.
- Pregnant women are at a higher risk for serious medical problems if they get the flu. One recent study found that the risk of flu-related hospitalizations was four times higher in healthy pregnant women in the fourteenth week of pregnancy or later than in nonpregnant women.
- In addition, vaccination of the mother will provide some protection for her newborn.

### **15. What can you tell me about the preservatives in the vaccine?**

- Kettering Health Network provides preservative-free vaccines.

### **16. The religious doctrine that I follow is contrary to influenza vaccination. How do I obtain a *lifetime* religious exemption for the influenza vaccine?**

- **New in 2019:** religious exemption approval will be for a *lifetime*, which means an employee will not have to annually request for religious exemption. We will honor all approved 2018-19 religious exemptions.
- If a religious conflict is present, you will need to contact the Employee Health department to receive a copy of the religious exemption form. The forms will also be available on the KHN Intranet at each campus's Employee Health website.
- You will need to complete the form and have it notarized. Notary services are available at most KHN hospital campuses. Please contact Employee Health or Human Resources with questions regarding notary availability at your campus.
- The completed form should be emailed to [KHNFluCampaign@ketteringhealth.org](mailto:KHNFluCampaign@ketteringhealth.org) to be reviewed by the Employee Influenza Vaccine Exemption Committee. This form will be placed in your Employee Health file.
- Religious exemptions must be received by **October 1 every year**. For those individuals with a previously approved religious exemption, only the top portion of the form needs completed and

submitted annually.