



# Conducting flu vaccination clinics during COVID-19?

## Review the CDC guidance

During the COVID pandemic, healthcare providers must continue to provide essential services, like vaccinations, to patients to help reduce the burden on our healthcare system during this upcoming influenza season.<sup>1</sup> To help create successful and safe influenza immunization clinics, the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** has provided interim guidance intended to assist immunization providers in a variety of clinical and alternative settings for the safe administration of vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>1</sup>

This guidance will be continually reassessed and updated based on the evolving epidemiology of COVID-19 in the United States. Healthcare providers who administer vaccines should also consult guidance from state, local, tribal, and territorial health officials.<sup>1</sup>

## An overview of CDC guidance

### Considerations for Influenza Vaccinations

- Annual influenza vaccination is recommended for all persons age 6 months and older without contraindications.<sup>1,2</sup>
- Healthcare providers should consult current influenza vaccine recommendations for guidance around timing of administration and use of specific vaccines.<sup>1</sup>
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, reducing the overall burden of respiratory illnesses is important to help protect vulnerable populations at risk for severe illness, the healthcare system, and other critical infrastructure. Thus, healthcare providers should focus on providing vaccination for all eligible patients.<sup>1</sup>

### Considerations for Alternative Vaccination Sites

- Guidance has been developed for the administration of vaccines at pharmacies; temporary, off-site, or satellite clinics; and mass influenza vaccination clinics.<sup>1</sup>
- Other approaches to vaccination during the COVID-19 pandemic may include drive-through immunization services at fixed sites, curbside clinics, mobile outreach units, or home visits.<sup>1</sup>

- Provide specific appointment times or other strategies to manage patient flow and avoid crowding.<sup>1</sup>
- Ensure sufficient staff and resources to help move patients through the clinic as quickly as possible.<sup>1</sup>
- Limit the overall number of attendees at any given time, particularly for populations at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.<sup>1</sup>
- Establish unidirectional site flow with signs, ropes, or other measures to direct traffic and ensure physical distancing between patients.<sup>1</sup>
- If possible, designate a separate vaccination area or separate hours for persons at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.<sup>1</sup>
- Select a large enough space to ensure a minimum distance of 6 feet between patients in line or in waiting areas for vaccination, between vaccination stations, and in post-vaccination monitoring areas.<sup>1</sup>

Access full CDC guidance [HERE](#)

# Flu vaccine storage and handling

## CDC considerations for preserving an effective cold chain

This flu season, preparing for proper vaccine storage and handling is as important as ever.<sup>1,3</sup> With flu clinic preparations under way, extra attention may need to be placed on vaccine storage and handling processes to help ensure that cold chain protocol is adhered to, even in non-traditional clinic settings.<sup>1</sup>

## CDC vaccine storage and handling guidance



### Vaccine Transport

- Vaccines that will be used at an off-site or satellite facility ideally should be delivered directly to that facility.<sup>3</sup>
- Vaccines should only be transported using appropriate packing materials that help provide the maximum protection.<sup>3</sup>



### Temperature Control

- If delivery to the specific site is not possible, then vaccines can be transported in a stable storage unit and monitored with a temperature monitoring device (TMD).<sup>3</sup>
- If the facility doesn't have the capacity to refrigerate the vaccines, then a portable vaccine storage unit or qualified container and packout may be used with a digital data logger.<sup>3</sup>
- The shipping materials the vaccines were initially shipped in should rarely, if ever, be reused, as they are not meant for reuse. This could put the cold chain and, ultimately, the viability of the vaccines at risk.<sup>3</sup>



### Transportation Time

- The total time for transport alone or transport plus clinic workday should be a maximum of 8 hours (eg, if transport to an off-site clinic is 1 hour each way, the clinic may run for up to 6 hours).<sup>3</sup>



### Proper Equipment

- Portable vaccine refrigerator/freezer units are the preferred equipment option for vaccine transport.<sup>3</sup>
- Qualified containers and packouts can also be used if a portable vaccine refrigerator is not available.<sup>3</sup>
- Only use hard-sided, insulated containers or Styrofoam™ (or other polystyrene foam) in the event of emergency transport.<sup>3</sup>
- Soft-sided containers specifically engineered for vaccine transport are acceptable.<sup>3</sup>
- Coolant materials such as phase change materials or frozen water bottles should be able to be conditioned to 4 °C to 5 °C.<sup>3</sup>
- When using insulating materials such as bubble wrap and corrugated cardboard, ensure adequate layering.<sup>3</sup>
- Each container should use a TMD.<sup>3</sup>

See additional guidance on conducting non-traditional clinics including proper staff training, inventory management, as well as emergency storage and handling.

Access full vaccine storage and handling toolkit [HERE](#)

**References:** **1.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vaccination guidance during a pandemic. Accessed July 11, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pandemic-guidance/index.html> **2.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Who should and who should not get a flu vaccine. Accessed July 30, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/whoshouldvax.htm> **3.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vaccine storage and handling toolkit. Accessed July 13, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/admin/storage/toolkit/storage-handlingtoolkit.pdf>

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