

2023-2024

Mandatory Student Influenza Vaccination Requirement

Influenza (the flu) can be a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death. Anyone can get very sick from the flu, including people who are otherwise healthy. Influenza and COVID-19 are caused by different viruses but are both contagious respiratory illnesses with many of the same symptoms. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is especially important to take all measures to decrease illnesses. For the safety and health of students and the broader MICA community, a mandatory flu vaccination policy is in effect for all MICA students.

Students currently residing in the Baltimore area can arrange to receive their flu vaccine (while supplies last) at MICA's Student Health Center (a separate communication will be sent out announcing flu vaccine availability). Students residing outside of the Baltimore area are required to submit written documentation attesting to their proof of vaccination by uploading their materials to the Student Health Center's online student portal, [Medicat](#).

The deadline to submit vaccine documentation for this year's flu vaccination is **Friday, November 3, 2023**. Vaccines must be administered during flu season and are typically available after August 1, 2023. Vaccines will be available in Baltimore after student arrival to campus.

The **deadline to submit a medical or religious exception request** for internal review is **Sunday October 29, 2023**. Medical exception requests must be signed by the student's current health care provider AND must be subsequently approved by MICA.

FAQ's – Frequently Asked Questions

Is it true that you can get the flu from the flu vaccine?

No, you cannot get the flu from the flu vaccine. The viruses in the flu shot vaccine are inactivated (killed) and therefore, cannot cause the flu. The viruses in the nasal spray vaccine are weakened and do not cause severe symptoms associated with influenza. Some people mistakenly confuse flu symptoms with the vaccine side effects. The most common vaccine side effects include:

- *From a flu shot:* Soreness, redness or swelling where the shot is given, mild headache, low grade fever, muscle aches, nausea, fatigue
- *From the nasal spray:* Runny nose, sore throat, cough, and headache

Almost all people who receive the influenza vaccine have no serious problems. However, if a student believes that they are experiencing adverse effects related to the vaccination, they should contact their primary care provider.

When should I get the flu vaccine?

The best time to get vaccinated is in the early fall including September and October before the flu season gets started. Generally, the CDC recommends the best time to be vaccinated is before the end of October.

Exceptions: What if I have a medical or religious reason for declining the flu vaccine?

An exception to the vaccination policy may be requested for certain medical reasons, including documentation of severe allergy to the vaccine or components as defined by the most current recommendations of the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) or a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome within six weeks of an influenza vaccine.

If receiving the vaccination conflicts with sincerely held beliefs, a request for religious accommodation may be made.

Compliance: What happens if I don't want to get the flu vaccine?

All students who fail to comply and who have not received an approved exception will not be allowed to attend classes for Spring 2024.

More Information on Influenza and Prevention

Centers for Disease Control

www.cdc.gov/flu

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/keyfacts.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm>