



HAWAII STATE
DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH

School-located Seasonal Influenza (flu) Vaccinations Frequently Asked Questions – School Administrators

1) Why vaccinate children against influenza (flu) in schools?

The Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH) believes this important initiative will benefit the health of Hawaii's school children, families, and communities.

Consider the following:

- School children have very high rates of flu illness, exceeding 10% in most years.
- Influenza outbreaks might be averted or their severity/impact decreased if a greater proportion of students are immunized.
- Studies show that school children vaccinated against flu have fewer illnesses, fewer absences from school, and lower rates of illness in their families during flu season, compared with unvaccinated children.
- Children are one of the most common sources of flu transmission in the community. Older people often catch flu virus from children; therefore, immunizing children may also prevent illness and death in our kupuna.

2) How many school children have been vaccinated through the Stop Flu at School program?

Over 60,000 students statewide are vaccinated each year through the Stop Flu at School program.

3) Do medical authorities recommend flu shots for school age children?

Yes. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends yearly flu vaccination for ALL children aged 6 months – 18 years. This recommendation should reduce the risk of flu among children, their need for doctors' visits, and missed time from school. Also, decreasing the spread of flu among children may reduce flu among their household members and within the community.

4) When will the school flu vaccination program begin?

Flu vaccination clinics will be scheduled from October through November 2013.

5) Who is eligible for the FREE flu vaccine at school?

All students attending kindergarten through the eighth (K-8) grade are eligible to receive the free flu vaccine at school. Teachers, administrators, and other paid school staff may also receive the vaccine if vaccine supply is sufficient. All Hawaii public and private schools with K-8 grade students will have the opportunity to participate.

6) What do I have to do if I would like my school to participate?

To sign up, complete the online registration form at <http://vaxresponse.doh.hawaii.gov>, by April 17, 2013.

7) Assuming my school has opted to participate, what do we do now?

- a. Identify four dates - two days in October and two days in November - when you would prefer the vaccination clinic to be held.
- b. Identify a school liaison who will work closely with DOH to coordinate and implement the vaccination clinic.
- c. Schedule a clinic date with DOH.
- d. Distribute hard-copy consent forms to students when they become available from DOH.
 - Parents/guardians may opt to complete an online version of the Student Vaccination Consent Form. If they choose this option, they must still print out the form and return it to the school.
 - More information regarding the online vaccination consent form site will be sent to participating schools at a later date.
- e. Inform faculty and staff about the program. All faculty and staff who wish to participate in the program must complete their consent forms online. Consent forms must be printed, signed and dated, and returned to the school at which the faculty/staff is employed. Deadlines for turning in consent forms will apply.
- f. Collect completed student and faculty/staff consent forms.
- g. Adhere to deadlines for consent form distribution and collection.
- h. Identify a large location at your school for DOH approved staff to set-up and run the clinic, including a designated waiting area for clinic staff to monitor students for 15 minutes after being vaccinated.
- i. Notify students' parents of the clinic date and time.
- j. Coordinate and provide personnel to escort participating students to and from the clinic location on the day of the vaccination clinic.

8) How long will the vaccination clinic last?

This will depend upon the number of students participating at your school. In general, a medium sized school's clinic should last approximately 4 hours (includes ½ hour set-up and ½ hour clean-up).

9) What resources are available to help explain the program to students and their families?

DOH will provide:

1. A frequently asked questions (FAQ) flyer explaining the flu vaccination program.
2. A hotline that parents and guardians can call for more information (Aloha United Way's 2-1-1).

10) Are students required to be vaccinated against flu?

No. Participation in the school-located program is voluntary and consent from the child's parent or guardian is required. However, parents should know that it is now recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices that all children aged 6 months through 18 years should be vaccinated yearly against flu (refer to question #3).

11) What if a student is absent on the day when vaccinations are offered?

Students who miss a scheduled school flu vaccination clinic can call their regular health care provider to schedule a vaccination appointment. The only way to receive a free flu vaccine through this program is at school on the scheduled clinic date. Make-up clinic dates will not be scheduled.

12) Who will administer the vaccine?

Trained DOH-appointed personnel will administer the flu vaccine.

13) Many children dislike needles and shots. Is there another way to get vaccinated?

Yes. In addition to the traditional "flu shot," the nasal spray flu vaccine will be offered.

14) Are flu vaccines safe?

Yes. A recent study of the flu shot involving more than 45,000 infants and children found the vaccine is safe in this population. This adds to prior evidence of flu vaccine safety.

15) What organizations have partnered with DOH to make the school flu vaccination project a success?

Many other agencies have assisted DOH in organizing, implementing and evaluating the school flu vaccination project including:

- Department of Defense
- Hawaii Department of Education
- Hawaii Association of Health Plans
- Hawaii Association of Independent Schools
- Hawaii Catholic Schools
- Hawaii's schools of nursing at Hawaii Pacific University, the University of Hawaii at Manoa, University of Hawaii at Hilo and University of Hawaii Maui College
- University of Hawaii at Hilo College of Pharmacy
- Kapiolani Community College and Kauai Community College Nursing Programs
- Hawaii Medical Reserve Corps
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Others have endorsed the program as a positive contribution to community health including the Hawaii Chapters of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians.