



## Influenza Prevention + Vaccination

Dear Emory Faculty and Staff:

As you are no doubt aware, 2017-18 is proving to be a worse-than-usual flu season. Influenza activity is widespread across Georgia, as it is in the rest of the country. We are writing with some guidance to help mitigate the impact of this influenza epidemic in our community.

**To prevent the spread of influenza**, CDC recommends the following strategies:

- Try to avoid close contact with sick people. If you become sick yourself, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
- If you are sick with flu or a flu-like illness (fever, cough and/or sore throat, muscle aches and/or headache), stay home for at least 24 hours after you no longer need to use medicine to control your fever.
- If you are sick with the flu, and have other health problems (such as asthma), seek medical evaluation early. Anti-viral prescription medications can help reduce the severity of illness for many patients with influenza. Check here for "[Who should take antiviral drugs?](#)"
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash. If you don't have a tissue, cough into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hand.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like the flu.
- Wash your hands after touching common items such as door handles and elevators, or visiting common areas such as restrooms and dining halls.

Even though the 2017-18 vaccine does not cover all strains of influenza that are circulating nationally, the CDC still recommends vaccination, even this late in the season, in order to get the best achievable protection. Even if the vaccine proves to be a poor match for this year's flu, it can still reduce the severity of illness if you catch the flu. Vaccine is the best way to protect yourself from the flu; it cannot give you the flu!

Employees and covered dependents on the Emory POS or HSA medical plans can get a free flu shot at any pharmacy that accepts CVS Caremark. You will need to present your prescription drug card (CVS Caremark). You can get your flu vaccine at any time. For employees covered under one of these Emory medical plans, you can also get a flu shot as part of your preventive exam at no charge (EHN or in-network doctors only). Preventive exams are covered at 100 percent (which means there is no charge to you). However, if you already had your preventive exam this year and make an appointment for a flu shot, you may be charged for the visit. The medical plan will cover only one preventive exam per year.

Emory employees not on the Emory medical plan should contact their insurance provider for flu shot options. Flu shots are free under the Affordable Care Act (<http://www.hhs.gov/answers/affordable-care-act/will-the-aca-cover-my-flu-shot/index.html>). For more information about influenza vaccinations and prevention, please visit the CDC website at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>

Yours in health,

Scott Henderson, MD  
Executive Director  
Occupational Health

Alexander Isakov, MD, MPH  
Executive Director  
Office of Critical Event Preparedness and Response

Bruce Ribner, MD, MPH  
Professor of Medicine  
Division of Infectious Diseases