

# Marshfield Clinic: Flu vaccinations now available at Marshfield Clinic

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MARSHFIELD – Marshfield Clinic Health System is now offering influenza (flu) vaccinations at all primary care locations throughout Wisconsin.

Influenza, commonly referred to as “flu,” is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and sometimes the lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent flu is by getting a flu [vaccine](#) each year.

While influenza viruses circulate year-round, most of the time flu activity peaks between December and March, but activity can last as late as May.

“Influenza vaccination, in addition to a COVID-19 vaccine, is especially important this season because immunity has declined after a year with almost complete absence of flu circulation,” said Dr. Edward Belongia, an infectious disease epidemiologist at Marshfield Clinic Research Institute. “It’s important to get your flu vaccine as soon as possible because it can take up to two weeks for the immune system to produce antibodies against the vaccine strains.”

It is easy and convenient to schedule your flu vaccine online through your My Marshfield Clinic account. Visit [marshfieldclinic.org/flu](https://marshfieldclinic.org/flu) for information and appointment options. If you have not yet received your COVID-19 vaccine, you can plan to schedule it on the same day and time as your flu shot.

COVID-19 and influenza are very different, but both can cause severe respiratory illness and death. Older adults and people with underlying chronic diseases have the highest risk of COVID-19 hospitalization, but life-threatening illness also occurs in young, healthy individuals. COVID-19 infections are generally milder in children

than adults, but COVID-19 hospitalization rates in children increased dramatically in recent months. Influenza hospitalization rates are highest in older adults and infants. Common symptoms of COVID-19 and influenza include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle pain or body aches
- Headache

Loss of taste or smell is one symptom of COVID-19 that does not typically occur with influenza. It is important to contact your health care provider if you develop any of the above symptoms or have had contact with a person who has COVID-19.

“If you experience any of these symptoms, you should contact your doctor to be tested,” said [Dr. Belongia](#). “Many people with COVID-19 have mild illness or no symptoms, but they can still spread the virus to others.”

You may be able to spread influenza to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick. The time from when a person is exposed and infected with flu to when symptoms begin is about two days, but can range from about one to four days.

With COVID-19 and influenza, standard health safety precautions are necessary to prevent the spread. These include hand hygiene, social distancing, masking or covering your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze, and staying home when you feel sick.

If you have flu-like symptoms or known you have been exposed to COVID-19, you can contact your provider or use the [online screening](#) to determine your next steps and schedule a testing appointment.

Vaccine appointments are preferred, but Marshfield Clinic Health System locations also offer vaccination clinics periodically throughout the season to make it convenient for patients and community members to get their flu and COVID-19 vaccines.

Visit [marshfieldclinic.org/vaccinecalendar](https://marshfieldclinic.org/vaccinecalendar) for information on flu or COVID-19 vaccine clinics near you.

If you do test positive for COVID-19 or influenza, follow recommendations from your provider or public health. For most mild illnesses, you should stay home, drink lots of fluids and rest until your body recovers.

If you have been diagnosed with influenza, you may be prescribed influenza antiviral drugs, especially if you are considered high risk. If you have COVID-19 and meet treatment criteria, we offer monoclonal antibody therapy for patients with mild to moderate symptoms. This can protect people from severe illness or death in the coming days and weeks. Talk to your provider or care team about what treatment is best for you.

CDC recommendations for [isolation and quarantine after COVID-19 infection](#) depends on vaccination status.