

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and Talking Points About Flu and Flu Shots

(Last updated 7/18/11)

Members with specific questions or concerns about the flu or flu shots should call the primary care doctor. SCAN OnCall® nurses are also available toll-free 24 hours a day at 1-800-793-1717.

| Question | Answer |
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| 1. Does SCAN recommend flu shots for its members? | <p>Yes. SCAN strongly recommends you get a flu shot. We follow the advice of the best medical experts: the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Getting the seasonal flu shot every year is very important for people over age 50. Older adults are more likely to have complications from flu -- like pneumonia and even death. In the U.S., seasonal flu is related to more than 49,000 deaths and more than 200,000 hospitalizations every year. Most victims of seasonal flu are older adults and people with chronic health problems.</p> <p>If you have questions about getting a seasonal flu shot, talk to your doctor.</p> <p>(See also Question #22 for more info about who should get a seasonal flu shot.)</p> |
| 2. Are flu shots a covered benefit? | Yes. A flu shot is covered when you get it from your assigned SCAN doctor or Medical Group. |
| 3. What about the live, intranasal influenza vaccine (aka LAIV or "FluMist" nasal spray)? | No. The nasal spray (LAIV) seasonal flu vaccine is only approved for use in healthy people 2-49 years of age. |
| 4. Is there a co-payment for the flu shot? | There is no co-payment if you go to the doctor's office just for the flu shot. However, if you get your flu shot during a doctor's appointment you will have to pay the regular office visit co-payment. That co-payment is for the |

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| | office visit, not for the flu shot. |
| 5. Will SCAN pay for a flu shot I get in the community? | No. SCAN only covers seasonal flu shots from your SCAN doctor or Medical Group. We do not pay for seasonal flu shots from local pharmacies, senior centers, health departments or other public flu clinics. SCAN does not offer reimbursement if you use a non-SCAN provider. Non-SCAN providers cannot bill SCAN for your seasonal flu shot either. The exception may be if your doctor runs out of shots and directs you to another provider with whom they have made arrangements for payment. Some doctors and medical groups may set up a system to reimburse members who get their seasonal flu shots from another source. You should get information about this <u>before</u> you seek a seasonal flu shot in the community. |
| 6. Will Medicare pay for a flu shot? | No. When you joined SCAN you agreed to use SCAN providers for Medicare covered benefits like flu shots. Non-SCAN providers cannot bill Medicare for your seasonal flu shot. |
| 7. I got a flu shot last year – do I need it again? | Yes. Every year different types of flu go around. The seasonal flu shot combats the most common ones for this year, which are different than last year. For the best protection, you need a flu shot every year. |
| 8. What about H1N1 (“swine flu”)? | H1N1 is part of the 2011–2012 seasonal flu shot. A separate shot will not be needed to protect against H1N1 flu. |
| 9. Why should I get a flu shot if it does not protect me from all types of flu? | The flu shot will not be a perfect match for all types of flu (there are hundreds), but it will protect you from the most common ones for this year. In addition, research shows that even when you get a type of flu that was not in the shot, you are less likely to have severe complications. Some protection is always better than none! |
| 10. Do flu shots make you sick? Can I get the flu from the shot? | No. Flu shots are made from inactive (killed) viruses and cannot give you the flu. |
| 11. Is the flu really that serious? Do I really need a shot? | Yes. A flu episode itself may not seem so bad, but it weakens your body’s ability to fight other infections that could be very serious. Flu is the most common cause of death from a preventable disease. Every year thousands of people go to the hospital for the flu. Some even die because of the flu. |

| Question | Answer |
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| | Many of these are older adults. |
| 12. I am healthy so why do I need a flu shot? I never get sick, so why should I bother? | Healthy people need the flu shot to stay healthy. Without the flu shot healthy people can get the virus and pass it along to elders and children who could get sick and end up in the hospital. Protect yourself and your loved ones by getting a flu shot every year. |
| 13. How many flu shots do I need? | One every year. Talk to your doctor if you have questions. |
| 14. Should I get the high dose flu shot (aka Fluzone HD)? | Talk to your doctor about which flu shot is best for you. |
| 15. What is Fluzone HD? | Fluzone HD is a new type of flu shot approved by the FDA for people over age 65. Because the body responds less to the flu shot with age, an older adult does not get as much protection from the standard flu shot as a younger person. To offset that, Fluzone HD's dose is 4 times higher than the regular flu shot. Studies are underway to see if Fluzone HD provides more protection from flu and flu complications. Fluzone HD has been found to be as safe as the regular flu shot. A few people reported minor side effects like headache, fever or pain where they got the shot (usually the upper arm). |
| 16. When should I get a flu shot? | Seasonal flu typically peaks in January and February, so we encourage you to get your flu shot anytime between September and February. |
| 17. When is my doctor or Medical Group giving flu shots? | Call your doctor's office to find out when and where to get your seasonal flu shot. |
| 18. Can I use SCAN transportation to go get my flu shot? | Some benefit plans cover transportation to/from medical appointments and services. (Ride limits may apply.) You can use the transportation service if your plan includes transportation <u>and</u> you have not used up your rides for the year. To ask for a ride call 1-866-779-0560. Call at least 24 hours before you plan to go. If you need a wheelchair van, call 48 hours before. |
| 19. Why does SCAN strongly recommend flu shots for caregivers? | Without the flu shot healthy people can still get the virus, not suffer the effects, yet pass it along to older adults and children who are more likely to get sick. In addition, members whose caregivers who fall ill from flu often go without needed assistance when their caregiver is sick. The CDC |

| Question | Answer |
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| | recommends that all persons who live with or care for persons at high risk for influenza-related complications should get the flu shot every year. Caregivers are encouraged to get the flu shot from their own doctor, or seek a low cost shot in the community. |
| 20. Will SCAN give flu shots or flu shot vouchers/coupons to members and/or caregivers of SCAN members? | No. |
| 21. Where can I get more information about flu and flu shots? | www.scanhealthplan.com/fluinfo www.scanhealthplan.com/flu Also, check your Healthwise for Life book and look for information in our member newsletters. You may also call our Member Services Department at 1-800-559-3500 from 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., 7 Days a Week. TTY: Users: 1-800-735-2929. |
| 22. Who does the Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommend get flu shots? | Everyone 6 months and older. Especially important to get a shot are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all persons aged ≥ 50 years, and other adults at risk for medical complications from flu, • all persons who live with or care for persons at high risk for flu-related complications, including contacts of children aged < 6 months • people with chronic lung, heart, kidney, liver, nerve, blood or metabolic illnesses (includes diabetes) • people who have immune system problems, like HIV • residents of nursing homes and other long-term facilities |
| 23. Who should not get a flu shot? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with a severe allergy to egg or another part of the shot • Someone who had a severe reaction to a past flu shot Talk to your doctor if you have questions. |
| 24. Is the flu shot safe? | Yes. Millions of people get a seasonal shot each year with the worst |

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| | effects being soreness in the arm where the shot was given. For older adults and others who have a high risk of complications and death from seasonal flu, the risks of not getting the shot are worse than the risks posed by the shot. |
| 25. I already had the flu, so do I still need a flu shot. | Yes. There are multiple types of flu viruses that go around every year. The flu shot will protect you from three different viruses that you may not have been exposed to yet. |

If you have additional questions about flu shots, please call Member Services.

1-800-559-3500, 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m., 7 Days a Week.

TTY: Users: 1-800-735-2929 or to contact us online [click here](#).