

# health awareness



CTSI

A COUNTY HEALTH POOL PUBLICATION

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## FLU SHOTS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone six months of age or older get a flu shot every year. Because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, it is even more critical that people get an annual flu shot. The flu places an enormous burden on our medical system each year, and experts are worried that coupled with the increased burden of COVID-19 infections, the system might not be able to keep up, leaving people without necessary care.

### The Flu Season

The flu season generally runs from October to April, and people should be vaccinated

before the flu becomes widespread in their communities. It takes about two weeks for the vaccination to be fully effective.

Per the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the 2019-2020 flu season led to 35 million flu-related illnesses and 20,000 flu deaths. Flu cases and deaths dropped dramatically last year because of pandemic precautions, such as social distancing and mask wearing; however, as restrictions decrease, public health experts are worried that flu numbers will return to pre-pandemic levels, which average 290,000 to 650,000 deaths worldwide.

Most influenza deaths are caused by secondary respiratory tract or bacterial infections. People over 65 and children under five are at a higher risk of serious flu-related complications and should avoid exposure to infected people and get a flu shot.

### Types of Flu Shots

There are many different flu strains, and every year the vaccine is updated to match the strains that research indicates will be the most common that season. For the 2021-2022 season, the CDC advises that providers administer any licensed, age-appropriate flu vaccine (IIV, RIV4, or LAIV4).

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The CDC does not recommend any one type of flu vaccine over another.

### Where to Get a Flu Shot

Flu shots are available from multiple locations throughout your community. Your doctor and local health department offer the shots. Also, many large pharmacy chains such as Wal-

greens, CVS, etc., provide flu vaccinations. Visit [VaccineFinder.org](http://VaccineFinder.org) to see a list of places that offer flu shots near you.

### Flu Shots and COVID-19

Flu vaccines and COVID-19 vaccines can be given at the same time. The CDC has published Interim Guidance for Immunization Services During

the COVID-19 Pandemic ([www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pandemic-guidance/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pandemic-guidance/index.html)) to help providers safely continue offering vital immunization services during the Pandemic. Vaccinations, such as the flu shot, are an important component of preventative medical care and should not be delayed or skipped. 

## Benefits Corner

### 2022 Renewal and Open Enrollment

The County Health Pool (CHP) held its annual renewal and board meeting last month. The meeting was held via Zoom and had 75 participants. The CHP medical and Rx plans have a 3% cost increase, which is much lower than the average which ranges from 5.3 to 15% increase on the national level. The dental and life insurance plans will remain unchanged for 2022, as will co-payments, deductibles, coinsurance, or out-of-pocket maximums.

All seven CHP plans (5 PPO and 2 HDHP/HSA) will be maintained for 2022. Flu shots and preventative services are covered at 100%, subject to guidelines. Health Fairs are covered at \$40 annually, and CDL physicals are covered at 100% every two years or earlier if required to maintain a CDL. COVID-19 testing and vaccines are covered at 100% in compliance with the HHS Public Health Emergency. Telehealth cost share options for 2022 are under review and will be communicated closer to 2022.

### News from the Board Meeting

CHP will continue using its banded rate formula to determine where each entity falls for contribution and will continue tracking loss ratio numbers for entities.

Anthem will continue to be the CHP's administrative services only (ASO) provider for medical, prescription, and dental. The agreement includes adjudication for claims based on CHP Plan Documents and allows members access to a broad network of providers. IngenioRx will continue to be Anthem's partner for all Rx prescriptions, including mail order service, and VSP will continue as the CHP's ASO provider for vision.

ACA/IRS tax reporting continues. You will receive a 1095 B or 1095 C form from your employer again in 2022 for the 2021 tax year. Do not submit the form to the IRS. Keep a copy with your 2021 tax documents.

Open Enrollment changes go into effect 1/1/2022. Open enrollment meetings are being held virtually or in-person this year. Contact your Benefits Administrator to schedule a meeting. As always, CTSI staff is here to assist you with your health, dental, vision, or life insurance coverage. You can reach us at 303 861 0507.