The following are frequently asked questions about the flu shot. This document is intended to provide education about the safety and efficacy of the flu shot. Do you already know everything about the flu shot? Then use this document to test your knowledge! Don’t forget to mark your calendars!

### Annual University of Minnesota Duluth Flu Shot Clinic

**When?** Tuesday, Oct 13th, 9:00am - 3:00pm  
Wednesday, Oct 21st, 9:00am - 3:00pm  
**Where?** Kirby Rafters  
**Cost?** FREE with UMD student ID

#### Q: What is the flu shot?

The flu shot is a vaccine that all healthy people (6 months of age and older) should receive annually. It helps protect you from influenzae viruses associated with respiratory illness. The vaccine does not protect you from the stomach flu.

#### Q: What if I am afraid of needles?

Have no fear! There is also a nasal spray* version of the vaccine, which is needle-free. It is available for patients 2 to 49 years of age.  
*Unfortunately, the UMD Flu Shot Clinic will not be offering the nasal spray vaccine this year. If you are interested in this form of the vaccine, contact your local clinic or pharmacy to check availability.

#### Q: Can the flu shot give me the flu?

No. The flu shot contains dead flu virus, and a dead virus cannot give you the flu. Some people may still contract the live flu virus after receiving the vaccine, because it takes about two weeks for the flu shot to protect you from the naturally occurring virus. So get your flu shot as early as possible! Some people may report a mild fever or soreness at the injection site. Rest assured, these are not symptoms of the flu; rather, they are the result of your immune system responding to the vaccine.

#### Q: Is the flu shot safe?

Yes. It has been used by hundreds of millions for over 50 years and has a good safety record.

#### Q: I am allergic to eggs. Can I still get the flu shot?

Yes. There are formulations of the flu shot that do not contain any egg products.
Q: Do I need to get the flu shot every year?
Yes. The flu shot only protects you from the infection for about 8 to 10 months; therefore, it is important to receive the vaccine every year. Also, the viral strains in the flu shot change each year, so you need to receive the updated vaccine annually.

Q: How are the viral strains within the vaccine determined?
A large group of infectious disease specialists predict which viral strains are likely to be most prevalent in the population for each given flu season.

Q: Why was the 2014-2015 flu shot less effective than usual?
The viral strains included in the vaccine are selected by experts in infectious disease, but sometimes the selection is imperfect. Unfortunately, the predictions for the 2014-2015 flu season were a poor match. The efficacy of the vaccine will vary from year to year.

Q: What if I want to take a more natural route? I would rather contract the flu and allow my immune system to respond naturally.
Your body’s immune system cannot tell the difference between a dead and a living virus. It will mount a natural immune response in both cases. However, you do not have to experience days to weeks of flu symptoms when you get the flu shot!

Q: Can I still get the flu after getting the shot?
Unfortunately, yes. You can still become infected with a different variation of the flu virus that was not covered by the vaccine. However, receiving the flu shot can reduce symptom severity and duration of illness in those who do become infected.

Q: I never get sick, so why would I get the flu shot?
You cannot predict when you will get sick or when you will be exposed to the virus. In addition, some people will become infected with the virus without symptoms, making it possible to infect others unknowingly. By getting vaccinated, you are also protecting those around you.

Q: If I have more questions about the flu shot, where should I go?
1. Talk to your physician, nurse and/or pharmacist
2. Visit UMD Health Services at http://www.d.umn.edu/hlthserv/
3. Check out the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/index.htm or the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) at www.mdhflu.com

Written and illustrated by Rachel E Rockwell, in collaboration with the University of Minnesota Duluth College of Pharmacy and the University of Minnesota Duluth Health Services. Information within this document was derived from publications by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, and the Minnesota Department of Health. Created 9/11/15