

VA Health Care Personnel: Knowing the Difference Between the **Flu** and **COVID-19** Vaccines

The Department of Veterans Affairs anticipates that one or more COVID-19 vaccines may be approved for use later this year. This document will help you understand the difference between how VA currently distributes the flu vaccine and how VA will distribute the COVID-19 vaccine once it is available. Please note: The flu vaccine does not protect against COVID-19 and the COVID-19 vaccine does not protect against flu.



Flu Vaccine

Widespread availability through VA, Community Care and private hospitals, medical offices and pharmacies

Where to Get Vaccinated

VS

COVID-19 Vaccine

- Within VA, only available at VA health care facilities
- Unlikely to be offered in the community until much later in 2021

Standard vaccine storage requirements

Storage/ Handling

VS

Vaccines likely to be approved first would require:

- Storage in -20 and -70°F conditions
- Strict time requirements for cold chain where vaccine must be used within 7 to 10 days of arrival
- Vaccine must be used within six hours after thawing

No special procedures required for the flu vaccine

Patient Identification

VS

In Phase 1 of COVID-19 vaccination, processes will be needed to:

- Confirm if a Veteran or VA staff member meets eligibility criteria
- Ensure returning Veterans get the second dose that matches the first dose of the vaccine

- [COVID-19 Resource Room](#): Use to submit COVID-19 Vaccine questions
- COVID-19 Vaccine SharePoint Site: <https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhacovidvaccine/>
- COVID-19 Vaccine Communications Toolkit: <https://dvagov.sharepoint.com/sites/vhacovidvaccine/SitePages/Communication-Toolkits.aspx>

Your Safe Care is Our Mission

Visit the [COVID -19 Resource Room](#) to submit your vaccine questions.