

# How to Increase Influenza Immunizations



Providers and Responsible Entities should encourage patients to get the flu vaccination:

- Encourage patient's flu vaccine appointment
- Continue to provide educational information to patients who remain unvaccinated
- Provide flu [Vaccine Information Statement](#) to patients
- Teach patients about safe preventive measures

Influenza (flu) vaccination coverage is low in infants, older adults, pregnant women, and people with specific underlying medical conditions. The [CDC](#) estimates 7.4 million fewer flu doses were administered to adults in [2023](#) when compared to 2022.

Factors which may be contributing to lack of flu vaccination include:

- Lack of provider recommendations, concerns, or issues about unknown or severe side effects
- Patient's experience of mild side effects
- Lack of time or forgetting to get vaccinated

## **Resources**

Health care providers can use these tools to help patients get the flu vaccin:

- [Flu Vaccine Finder](#)
- Free parent-friendly educational materials on <https://immunizetexasorderform.com/> some of the more commonly requested materials include:
  - Immunization Schedule (birth – 18 years old) – stock #6-105
  - Immunization Schedule (Ages 18 or older) – stock #6-104
  - Ways to Prevent the Flu poster – stock #11-1401P
  - Fight the Flu brochure (English) – stock #11-13710
  - Vaccinate Through Life - stock #11-15317
  - Fight the Flu brochure (Spanish) – stock #11-13710A

For more information about flu, please visit the [CDC](#) or [DSHS](#) flu pages.

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## Pfizer Comirnaty PFS Update

Pfizer released a pre-filled syringe (PFS) presentation of the COVID- vaccine COMIRNATY for ages 12 and up. This new presentation is now available for ordering in the Vaccine Allocation and Ordering System (VAOS). The PFS cannot be frozen and must be stored between 2°C and 8°C (36°F and 46°F) in the refrigerator. The PFS can only be used through the expiration date printed on the carton.

The single-dose vial (SDV) is no longer available to order in VAOS. It is, however, still authorized and providers should use their current supply until it is exhausted or expires.

Further information about COMIRNATY is available in a [Pfizer COMIRNATY fact sheet](#) and the Pfizer SDV and PFS national drug codes (NDCs) are:

Manufacturer	NDC	Brand, if available	Description
Pfizer	00069-2362-10	COMIRNATY SDV	Ten-pack single-dose vial
Pfizer	00069-2377-10	COMIRNATY PFS	Ten-pack prefilled syringe

Unless designated as a specialty provider, TVFC providers must offer all Advisory Committee of Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommended vaccines to their TVFC-eligible patient population.

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## Temporary Temperature Monitor Update from McKesson

McKesson Distribution has been temporarily shipping alternative refrigerated coolers to providers since January 8, 2024 – either the 3M Company monitor or a new monitor called SpotSee. Both monitors serve the same purpose and have been thoroughly tested for effectiveness.

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) estimates this change will last until February 1, 2024. After February 1, 2024, a new and improved temperature monitor will be sent out with refrigerated vaccine shipments.

With the temporary coolers, providers should:

- follow the existing process for temperature excursions
- follow the directions on the information card specific to the monitors

For any questions about this update, email [txvaccineorders@dshs.texas.gov](mailto:txvaccineorders@dshs.texas.gov)

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## TVFC Pediatric Pre-book Flu Orders

Texas Vaccines for Children (TVFC) program providers should place orders for the 2024-2025 flu season. Orders are due by Friday, February 2, 2024, at 5:00 P.M. CST. 2024-2025 flu orders will be allocated in the fall of 2024. Flu pre-booking can be completed in the Vaccine Allocation and Ordering System (VAOS) under the flu pre-book module on the home page.

All TVFC providers must complete a short survey in the VAOS relating to flu pre-booking. This survey will help providers determine the quantity of each presentation to order.

Specialty providers who are not ordering flu vaccines must select “no, I do not want to order any flu vaccine for the 2024-2025 influenza season” option and provide one reason for not ordering the flu vaccine. The only acceptable reasons for not ordering flu vaccine are:

- This facility/office only gives specific vaccines.
- This office/facility only serves patients younger than six months of age, too young for flu vaccine.
- This facility/office is a DSHS site that does not see patients.

TVFC program providers may request preferred flu vaccine brands and formulations. Funding allocated to the TVFC program by the CDC may limit available products. Orders may be filled in full or partial shipments as vaccines become available in fall of 2024.

**Flu activity in Texas often peaks in February and can last through May. It is vital to continue vaccinating patients with the current 2023-2024 flu**

vaccine. Flu vaccines this season have been updated to better match circulating viruses. For questions regarding the ordering process for the 2024-2025 flu vaccine, contact your TVFC program Responsible Entity (RE).

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## TVFC/ASN Digital Data Logger Requirements

TVFC/ASN program providers should ensure the safety of their vaccines by properly monitoring the temperature of the storage units used to store vaccines with data loggers. Data loggers provide accurate and comprehensive monitoring of temperature excursions.

Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) requires TVFC/ASN-enrolled clinics to have a calibrated digital data logger in each unit that stores TVFC/ASN vaccine. Additionally, a valid certificate of calibration matching the serial number of the data logger in use must be readily available for review and is recommended to be posted on or near the refrigerator and/or freezer. Calibration testing is required every two to three years or per the manufacturer's suggested timeline.

All certificates of calibration must be sent to a provider's Responsible Entity (RE), who will submit them to the DSHS central office for processing. Providers with expired data logger certificates of calibration will be suspended until current certificates are received. Data logger certificates of calibration must contain the following:

- Model number
- Serial number
- Date of calibration
- Measurement results that indicate the unit passed the test and the documented uncertainty is within suitable limits (+/-1°F [+/-0.5°C])
- A statement indicating that it meets International Organization for Standardization/International Electronic Commission (ISO/IEC) 17025 standards

All TVFC/ASN-enrolled clinics must have at least one backup digital data logger with a valid and current certificate of calibration. The backup data logger must be stored outside the storage unit until needed to avoid vaccine space issues and differing temperature readings leading to potential confusion. The backup data logger is recommended to have a different calibration retesting date. DSHS

recommends TVFC/ASN program providers recalibrate their data loggers several weeks before their recalibration due date to ensure their clinic remains compliant with TVFC/ASN program requirements.

If a provider's data logger calibration certificates expire, their TVFC/ASN ordering capabilities in the Vaccine Allocation and Ordering System (VAOS) will be suspended until valid certificates of calibration for each expired data logger are submitted. To become reinstated, a provider must submit PDFs of valid certificates to their RE. After confirming compliance, the RE and DSHS central office will upload the new certificates and notify the provider once VAOS ordering capabilities are restored.

Promoting safe storage and handling of vaccines is one of the goals of the Texas Vaccines for Children (TVFC) and Adult Safety Net programs. Failure to properly store and handle a provider's vaccines can result in:

- Administering extra doses to patients
- Increasing costs for TVFC/ASN program providers
- Damaging public confidence in the programs

Keeping data loggers up to date ensures the safety and viability of the vaccines. TVFC/ASN program providers may refer to the [2023 TVFC/ASN Provider Manual](#) for additional guidance on the required protocol.