



UNIVERSITY POLICY

Section: 100.3.1

Section Title: Clinical, Compliance, Ethics, & Corporate Integrity: Clinical, Health, Safety, and Patient Care

Policy Name: Immunization Policy for Covered Individuals

Formerly Book: n/a

Approval Authority: Executive Vice President for Health Affairs

Responsible Executive: Executive Vice President for Health Affairs

Responsible Office: Executive Vice President for Health Affairs

Adopted: 12/23/2017

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1. Policy Statement

This Policy is intended to enhance the safety of our patients, visitors, students, clinical faculty, and clinical staff and protect them from exposure to specified Communicable Infectious Diseases while at our facilities and to promote the public health of the University community. Under this Policy, immunizations for the Communicable Infectious Diseases specified in this Policy are mandatory for all Covered Individuals unless such Covered Individual is an Exempted Individual. Additionally, if appropriate, the Executive Vice President for Health Affairs may specify additional Communicable Infectious Diseases to be included under this Policy. Any Exempted Individual must wear a face mask in Patient Care Areas and as Rutgers otherwise directs. In addition to this Policy, Rutgers encourages and supports other methods for preventing the spread of Communicable Infectious Diseases, including initiatives to promote good hand hygiene, encouragement for sick co-workers to stay home, and cleaning of high-touch surfaces (for example, counters, doorknobs, light switches, handles, stair rails, elevator buttons, desks, keyboards, phones, toilets, faucets, and sinks).

2. Reason for Policy

Certain Communicable Infectious Diseases, including Seasonal Influenza, are contagious diseases, often respiratory in nature, caused by pathogens such as viruses and bacteria. These pathogens can cause mild to severe illness and lead to the hospitalization and death of many individuals each year. The most effective way to prevent infection from these pathogens is

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through vaccination along with everyday preventative steps such as handwashing. This Policy is intended to reduce the risk of these diseases being acquired in the University community, particularly in the University's clinical settings, by maximizing immunization for Covered Individuals and making provisions for mandatory face mask usage for Exempted Individuals.

3. Who Should Read this Policy

All Covered Individuals (as defined below) who are employed by and/or affiliated with Rutgers University.

4. Resources

[The Joint Commission, CAMH IC 02.04.01. 2014](#)

[CDC. "Prevention Strategies for Seasonal Influenza in Healthcare Settings," 2014.](#)

[Recommendations of the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee \(HICPAC\) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices \(ACIP\)](#)

[State of New Jersey Department of Health Communicable Disease Service](#)

N.J.S.A. 26:2H-18.79

5. Definitions

Communicable Infectious Diseases: Contagious illnesses specified by the Executive Vice President for Health Affairs that lead to significant risk to the health and safety of patients, employees, and visitors, including but not limited to Seasonal Influenza and other contagious illnesses.

Covered Individual: All Health Care Personnel (defined below) and all Rutgers University Public Safety Personnel (defined below), at all locations, regardless of whether they have routine presence in Patient Care Areas (defined below) or have routine contact with patients.

Exempted Individual: A Covered Individual who receives an approved medical exemption or religious exemption from Rutgers University.

Flu Season: Typically, December 1st through March 31st, but exact starting and ending dates of the annual Flu Season shall be determined by Rutgers University's Executive Vice President for Health Affairs.

Health Care Personnel: Individuals who work directly or have other close contact with patients or who handle material that could spread infection in a Patient Care Area. This includes, but is not limited to, the following: physicians, nurses, emergency medical personnel, dental professionals, laboratory technicians, pharmacists, individuals who volunteer in Patient Care Areas, and administrative staff.

Patient Care Areas: All areas in which care is provided to patients, even if the Covered Individual is not providing patient care. These areas may include, but are not limited to, outpatient offices and clinics, patient waiting rooms, patient rooms, patient reception areas, meeting rooms used for patient/family consults, any location where a patient is evaluated or treated, and all

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hallways and similar passages that connect such areas to the outside or non-Patient Care Areas.

Public Safety Personnel: Employees of Rutgers University under the command of the Rutgers University Executive Director of Public Safety/Chief of University Police whose assignment requires or could require them to be in contact with patients for any amount of time.

Seasonal Influenza: A contagious respiratory illness caused by the influenza viruses.

6. The Policy

I. Seasonal Influenza

- A. Under this Policy, a Seasonal Influenza vaccine is mandatory for all Covered Individuals unless such Covered Individual is an Exempted Individual. Each year, Covered Individuals must provide proof of Seasonal Influenza vaccination prior to the start date of Flu Season or submit any exemption request(s) by November 1 of the current Flu Season. Proof of influenza vaccination must be uploaded to https://rtr.ipo.rutgers.edu/influenza_upload or as the University otherwise directs.
- B. A Covered Individual who has received the Seasonal Influenza vaccination at a non-Rutgers facility, pharmacy, or physician's office must provide proof of immunization by uploading appropriate documentation to https://rtr.ipo.rutgers.edu/influenza_upload or as the University otherwise directs.
- C. Following the effective date of this Policy, any new Covered Individual, prior to commencement of their relationship with Rutgers or upon becoming a Covered Individual, will be required to provide proof of Seasonal Influenza vaccination for the current year/season, receive a Seasonal Influenza vaccine, or furnish any exemption request(s), if the relationship begins during Flu Season or a person becomes a Covered Individual during Flu Season. Failure to do so will result in rescission of the Covered Individual's conditional offer of employment. If the relationship begins before Flu Season, then the Covered Individual will be required to abide by this Policy prior to the start date of Flu Season.

II. Additional Immunizations

- A. From time to time, the Executive Vice President for Health Affairs, working in conjunction with the University leadership, may specify additional Communicable Infectious Diseases for which Covered Individuals must be immunized or receive an exemption. The Executive Vice President for Health Affairs will determine the date by which immunizations must be completed and determine the date by which exemption requests must be submitted. The immunization requirements will be communicated with sufficient lead time to enable Covered Individuals to obtain immunizations or to request an appropriate exemption. Proof of immunization for any such Communicable Infectious Diseases must be provided in the manner specified by the University.

III. Exemptions

Any Covered Individual who wants to apply for an exemption must complete either a medical exemption or religious exemption request for consideration. All Covered Individuals applying for an exemption must complete an attestation statement consistent with the requirements below. The University will review all completed and submitted

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exemption requests. Covered Individuals will be notified of the outcome of their requests. All decisions will be final.

A. Medical Exemptions

1. Covered Individuals may be eligible for a medical exemption in accordance with applicable law and on a case-by-case basis, if they have a medical condition which precludes them from being vaccinated against the specified Communicable Infectious Disease(s), and if the condition is supported by appropriate documentation from a treating health care provider.
2. Any Covered Individual requesting a medical exemption shall complete and submit a Request for Medical Exemption From Vaccination Form, located in the Rutgers Vaccination Portal. The completed request must be submitted online via the [Rutgers Vaccination Portal](#) by November 1 of the current Flu Season and/or the date(s) specified by the Executive Vice President for Health Affairs for other Communicable Infectious Diseases. If the Executive Vice President for Health Affairs specifies additional Communicable Infectious Diseases for which Covered Individuals must be immunized, the Executive Vice President for Health Affairs will specify how exemption requests can be submitted.

B. Religious Exemptions

1. Covered Individuals may be eligible for a religious exemption in accordance with applicable law and on a case-by-case basis.

Any Covered Individual requesting a religious exemption must complete and submit an online Request for Religious Exemption From Vaccination Form, located in the [Rutgers Vaccination Portal](#). The completed request must be submitted online via the Rutgers Vaccination Portal by November 1 of the current Flu Season and/or by the date(s) specified by the Executive Vice President for Health Affairs for other Communicable Infectious Diseases. If the Executive Vice President for Health Affairs specifies additional Communicable Infectious Diseases for which Covered Individuals must be immunized, the Executive Vice President for Health Affairs will specify how exemption requests can be submitted. <mailto:>

C. Exempted Individuals

1. For Exempted Individuals, it is mandatory to wear properly a face mask (available from Rutgers) over the mouth and nose in Patient Care Areas, in any other areas designated by Rutgers, and as Rutgers otherwise directs. Masks will be available generally, at no cost, in Patient Care Areas and should be changed when they are overly moist, become ripped, or otherwise deteriorate. Exempted Individuals may be subject to additional requirements as deemed appropriate by the Executive Vice President for Health Affairs.
2. In general, once Rutgers approves a religious exemption, unless otherwise limited, a Covered Individual will not be required to submit requests for exemption in the future.

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3. In general, once Rutgers approves a medical exemption, unless otherwise limited, a Covered Individual will not be required to submit requests for exemption in the future.
4. If approval of an exemption is limited, an exemption is valid only for the period of time during which the medical condition exists. The Covered Individual will be required to receive an appropriate vaccination(s) or reapply for an exemption after the expiration date of the exemption.

IV. Non-Compliance

Any Covered Individual who fails to be vaccinated by the applicable deadline, fails to be approved for a valid medical or religious exemption by the applicable deadline, or otherwise fails to comply with the provisions of this Policy, will not be permitted to work in a Patient Care Area and will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment. A Covered Individual who begins their relationship with the University during Flu Season and who fails to be vaccinated prior to the commencement of employment, fails to be approved for a valid medical or religious exemption prior to the commencement of employment, or otherwise fails to comply with the provisions of this Policy prior to the commencement of employment may have their conditional offer of employment rescinded.

V. Limited Scope

The provisions of this Policy are limited to the requirements set forth above and are not intended to, and shall not, change any requirements regarding the use of personal protective equipment, or other immunizations, required by other University Policy, University directives, or applicable law, either in a Patient Care Area or in other locations.

VI. Documentation of Seasonal Influenza Vaccination from a Source Other Than Rutgers

If a Covered Individual receives a Seasonal Influenza vaccination from a vaccination source other than Rutgers, the Covered Individual must submit an attestation in a form and manner designated by the University. The attestation shall include the lot number of the vaccination the Covered Individual received, the date the vaccination was received, and the business, facility, and/or location where the vaccine was received.

VII. Exceptions

Exceptions to any provisions within this Policy may be granted only by the Executive Vice President for Health Affairs or his or her designee.