Immunization by Dentists: Questions and Answers

Can dentists give vaccines in Minnesota?
Effective January 1, 2015, Minnesota law (Minn. Stat. §150A.055) allows licensed dentists to give influenza (flu) vaccine to people ages 19 and older, but they need to meet certain requirements first.

What are the requirements for dentists who want to give flu vaccine?
1. **Complete training** - Dentists must complete a training course approved by the Minnesota Board of Dentistry. Information on approved courses is available at mn.gov/health-licensing-boards/dentistry. You may also call the Board of Dentistry at (612) 617-2250.
2. **Follow federal recommendations** – Dentists must follow federal recommendations on immunization, which include:
   - General Recommendations on Immunization: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr6002a1.htm. The recommendations provide important information on:
     - Vaccine administration
     - Vaccine storage and handling
     - Equipment and procedures for responding to medical emergencies
     - Information that must be provided to patients prior to vaccination
     - Documentation requirements
     - Obligation to report adverse events
   - Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. CDC publishes flu recommendations annually, www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6332a3.htm.
3. **Report flu vaccine doses given** - Dentists must report all flu vaccines that they give to their patients’ primary physicians.
   - The best way to do this is by recording vaccinations in the Minnesota Immunization Information Connection (MIIC). MIIC is a system that stores vaccination records all in one place. This allows all members of a patient’s health care team to see the patient’s full vaccination record.
   - Enrolling in MIIC is easy and free for dentists. The first step in getting started with MIIC is to contact your regional coordinator. To find the MIIC Regional Coordinator in your area, check: www.health.state.mn.us/miic

What immunization best practices should dentists follow?
In addition to the requirements included in the law, dentists, like all health care professionals, should follow the Standards for Adult Immunization Practice set by the National Vaccine Advisory Committee, available at www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/patient-ed/adults/for-practice/standards/index.html

Is flu vaccination covered by insurance if given by a dentist?
Dental insurance plans generally do not cover immunization, and most medical insurance plans will not cover vaccines given by dentists. Patients should check with their insurers.

Will all dentists be offering flu vaccination?
Nothing in the new law requires dentists to offer flu vaccine. The decision to offer flu vaccine is up to the dentist.

What kinds of flu vaccines can dentists give?
Dentists who meet the law’s requirements may give either injected (flu shot) or intranasal flu vaccine (FluMist).
How can dentists obtain flu vaccine to give to their patients?
Vaccine for each flu season is pre-ordered in February or March and shipped around August or September.

How can dentists get answers to their questions about immunization?
Contact the MDH Immunization Program at (651) 201-5503 or (800) 657-3970. CDC also offers consultations at (800) CDC-INFO. You can also contact the Minnesota Board of Dentistry at (612) 617-2250 or see mn.gov/health-licensing-boards/dentistry.