

# Free Flu Shots at the Health Center

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With flu season on the horizon, students interested in getting their flu shot no longer need to look further than Westhill's very own School Based Health Center.

As is the case for many students, making appointments at doctors' offices and walk-in clinics across Stamford is often a challenge, especially once mid-November hits and waiting rooms become increasingly crowded with people hoping to get their vaccines.

Scenarios such as a lack of health insurance also play a role in preventing students and teens from getting a flu shot, even if they want one. For many years now, the Health Center has been providing free flu shots to any student who is interested, regardless of their insurance status, through the Connecticut Vaccine Program.

In order to receive a flu shot through the Health Center, students must first be signed up for their services. This is a step that simply includes having a parent or guardian sign an online permission form, and only then would a student be able to begin their vaccine process. Maria Telesca, the Health Center's nurse practitioner, would answer any outstanding questions and provide additional vaccine education before giving the student a vaccine consent form. Once consent is given, an appointment is scheduled, and a free flu shot is administered.

Working with pediatricians and other health professionals, Westhill's School Based Health Center "provides free confidential mental health therapy, psychiatric, medical, and

dental health care resources for individuals who are enrolled," said Jessica Fidler, the mental health therapist. Services are provided year round during school hours, and the availability of a medical center in our school building helps prevent unnecessary absences by enabling students to minimize their time away from school for medical visits.

Our School Based Health Center also provides annual physicals, sports physicals, sick visits, testing, and other lab work in addition to immunizations such as the free flu shots. This is in addition to the array of mental health resources that students may also take advantage of.

Mental health providers are available for both individual and group therapy sessions, and there are frequent opportunities to connect with a psychiatric provider on site. Care is provided regardless of a student's ability to pay and is always confidential.

"The Health Center's priority is to help students feel their best!" Nurse Telesca said.

Whether you are interested in getting a free flu shot, need a physical done for the upcoming winter season, or are simply looking for medical resources, the doors of the Health Center are always open with people ready to help.



School Based Health Center Entrance of the Health Center, in the 100s.  
Photo by Isabela Pinto ('27)