

Make a Strong Flu Vaccine Recommendation

FIGHT FLU



Information for Health Care Professionals

CDC recommends everyone 6 months of age and older get an influenza vaccine every year. Vaccination is especially important for people 65 years and older because of their high risk of developing serious complications from flu.

Your Vaccine Recommendation is Critical

As a health care professional, your strong recommendation is a critical factor in whether your patients get a flu vaccine. Research indicates that adults are likely to get their flu vaccine if their doctor or health care provider recommends it to them. Most adults believe vaccines are important, but they need a reminder from you to get vaccinated.

Adults 65 and Older Need a Flu Vaccine

People 65 years and older are at high risk of serious, flu-related complications because their immune systems become weaker with age. In addition, patients that have an underlying medical condition such as diabetes or heart disease have an additional factor putting them at risk of serious complications from influenza.

- Recently, approximately 71% to 85% of seasonal flu-related deaths in the United States have occurred among people 65 years and older.
- In recent years, an estimated 54% to 70% of seasonal flu-related hospitalizations have occurred among people 65 years and older

When to Vaccinate

- The CDC recommends that patients get a flu vaccine by the end of October, if possible. However, as long as flu viruses are circulating, vaccination should continue throughout flu season, even into January or later.
- After making a flu vaccine referral, follow up with each patient during subsequent appointments to ensure the patient received the influenza vaccine. If the patient still is unvaccinated against flu, repeat the recommendation and try to identify and address any questions or concerns.



For more information, visit:

www.cdc.gov/flu

or call **1-800-CDC-INFO**



**U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services**
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

How to Make a Strong Flu Vaccine Recommendation

The SHARE method can help you to make a strong vaccine recommendation and provide important information to help patients make informed decisions about vaccinations.

S- SHARE the reasons why the influenza vaccine is right for the patient given his or her age, health status, lifestyle, occupation, or other risk factors.

“This vaccine can protect you from flu, which is more likely to cause severe illness for you because of changes in the immune system that happen with aging, making you more prone to severe illness from influenza.”

H- HIGHLIGHT positive experiences with influenza vaccines (personal or in your practice), as appropriate, to reinforce the benefits and strengthen confidence in flu vaccination.

Tell your patients that CDC and you recommend they get the influenza vaccine each year.

A- ADDRESS patient questions and any concerns about the influenza vaccine, including side effects, safety, and vaccine effectiveness in plain and understandable language.

“A flu shot cannot cause flu illness. Flu shots are made either with flu vaccine viruses that have been ‘inactivated,’ making them not infectious or with no flu vaccine viruses at all. The most common side effects of an influenza vaccine are mild, like redness, swelling, or pain in your arm where the shot was given. This should go away within a few days.”

R- REMIND patients that influenza vaccines protect them and their loved ones from serious flu illness and flu-related complications.

“Flu activity is going to start to pick up, and CDC says to expect more cases in the coming months. That is why I want to make sure I help protect you and your loved ones.”

E- EXPLAIN the potential costs of getting the flu, including serious health effects, time lost (such as missing work or family obligations), and financial costs.

“While flu seasons can vary in severity, during most seasons, people 65 years and older bear the greatest burden of severe flu disease, making it important for you to get vaccinated. Flu vaccination can reduce potential serious complications from flu illness and prevent flu-related hospitalizations.”

Types of Vaccinations Available

The following flu vaccines are recommended for the 2017-18 flu season:*

Vaccine type	Vaccine description	Recommended for
Trivalent (3-STRAIN)	Contains the three most common influenza strains predicted to be circulating	Anyone 6 months & older
Quadrivalent (4-STRAIN)	Contains the three common influenza strains predicted to be circulating, plus an additional strain	Anyone 6 months & older
Adjuvanted & High-Dose (immune-boosting)	Designed to deliver a stronger immune response	Adults 65 years and older
Recombinant	Produced without the use of the influenza virus or chicken eggs	Adults 18 years and older

* Note that the live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) is not recommended for the 2017-18 flu season.