



Making a Strong Flu Vaccine Recommendation

Vaccine Recommendations Matter

As a family physician, your patients' decisions to receive the influenza vaccination depend heavily on your strong recommendation. Assess when patients are due for [scheduled immunizations](#) and discuss with them at visits about the importance of vaccinating against influenza and other diseases and [listen to their concerns](#). Encourage vaccination and inform patients that flu vaccinations protect them, their families and their communities from serious illness, hospitalization or even death.

To further assure your patients, you can share that flu vaccines are verified for their effectiveness each year, and the composition is updated annually to ensure the best coverage for current viral strains. Monitor the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and the [American Academy of Family Physicians](#) websites, as they routinely provide updates about the seasonal flu as information becomes available.

Flu Vaccination Timing

September and October are still the best months to vaccinate most patients. However, there are certain groups of people that could receive their vaccination in *July* or *August*, such as individuals with the following circumstances¹:

- People who are pregnant in their third trimester to ensure their baby is protected from the flu after birth
- Children who need two doses can get the first dose once the vaccine becomes available
- Children who have health care visits during the months before school starts and might not visit their physician in September or October

Flu Vaccination for Patients with Egg Allergies

Any patient with any history of egg allergy (regardless of severity) may receive any influenza vaccine (egg-based or non-egg-based) that is otherwise appropriate for their age and health status.¹ Additional safety measures beyond those recommended for any vaccine are no longer necessary.

Strong Recommendations Using the SHARE Method

The CDC and AAFP recommend that family physicians make a strong vaccine recommendation using the "SHARE" method.² SHARE stands for **S**hare, **H**ighlight, **A**ddress, **R**emind and **E**xplain. It helps physicians and care teams make informed decisions about the importance of vaccinations together with their patients. Use or customize some of the quotes associated with the SHARE method to the right to assure patients who are hesitant to receive the flu vaccine.

REFERENCES

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2023-2024 CDC flu vaccination recommendations adopted. Accessed January 18, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/spotlights/2022-2023/flu-vaccination-recommendations-adopted.htm>
2. CDC. Make a strong flu vaccine recommendation. Accessed January 18, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/professionals/vaccination/HCP-Make-a-Strong-Flu-Vaccine-Rec-Flyer-HCVG-15-FLU-112-Final.pdf>

SHARE why the flu vaccine is right for the patient.

"Vaccination helps prevent flu-related illnesses for you and your family. Vaccinating yourself against the flu now will protect you and others later, such as your parents and kids, who may be more susceptible to developing a bad case of illness if they contract the flu."

HIGHLIGHT positive experiences to reaffirm the advantages and build confidence in flu vaccination.

"My family members, myself and my staff all get the flu vaccine each year to protect ourselves and each other."

ADDRESS questions and issues patients may have, such as side effects, safety concerns and the shot's efficacy.

"You cannot get the flu from a vaccination. Mild side effects do occur, such as discomfort, swelling, redness or a low-grade fever, but disappear in a few days. The vaccine will lessen the severity of any sickness if or when you contract the virus."

REMIND patients that flu vaccinations prevent major illness, which can lead to hospitalization or even death for some people.

"We are currently in the flu season, which normally lasts from September to March. I want to make sure you and your loved ones are protected from serious illness and any possible dangerous side effects from the flu."

EXPLAIN the possible consequences of contracting the flu, including health effects, missed job or family obligations, financial impacts and the possibility of infecting susceptible family members and friends.

"The flu vaccine can protect others more susceptible to serious flu complications and lessen the likelihood of flu-related symptoms, medical visits and missed work and school."