

Make a Strong Flu Vaccine Recommendation

FIGHT FLU



Information for Health Care Professionals

CDC recommends everyone 6 months and older get an influenza (flu) vaccine every year.

Your Vaccine Recommendation is Critical

As a health care professional (HCP), your strong recommendation is a critical factor in whether your patients get a flu vaccine. Children younger than 5 years of age – especially those younger than 2 years – are at high risk of developing serious [flu-related complications](#). A flu vaccine offers the best defense against flu and its potentially serious complications and spreading it to others. Getting vaccinated can reduce flu illnesses, doctor's visits, missed work and school days, and prevent flu-related hospitalizations and deaths.

Children 6 months-17 years Need a Flu Vaccine

Millions of children get sick with seasonal flu, thousands are hospitalized, and some children die from flu each year.

- Flu vaccine can be life-saving in children.
- Among reported pediatric deaths since 2004, about 80 percent of the deaths have occurred among children who were not fully vaccinated against flu.
- Children aged 6 months up to their 5th birthday – even those who are healthy – are at high risk of developing serious flu complications simply because of their age. Children of any age with certain long-term health problems, such as asthma, diabetes, or neurological and neurodevelopmental conditions, also are at high risk for complications from flu.



When to Vaccinate

CDC recommends that vaccination should be offered in September or October. However, vaccination should continue throughout flu season as long as flu viruses are circulating, even into January or later.

Some children 6 months through 8 years of age require two doses of flu vaccine. Children 6 months through 8 years getting vaccinated for the first time, and those who have only previously received one dose of vaccine, should get two doses of vaccine this season. The first dose should be given as soon as vaccine becomes available.

The second dose should be given at least 28 days after the first dose. The first dose “primes” the immune system; the second dose provides immune protection. Children who only get one dose but need two doses can have reduced or no protection from a single dose of flu vaccine. All children who have previously received two doses of vaccine (at any time) only need one dose of vaccine this season.

If you do not offer vaccine at your facility, make a flu vaccine referral, and then follow up with each patient during subsequent appointments to ensure they got vaccinated. If the patient remains unvaccinated, repeat the recommendation/referral and try to identify and address any questions or concerns.

How to Make a Strong Flu Vaccine Recommendation

Based on years of research into vaccine motivators, CDC has developed a mnemonic device to help HCPs make a strong vaccine recommendation. This method known as “SHARE” can help you to make a strong vaccine recommendation and provide important information to help patients make informed decisions about vaccinations.



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

S- SHARE the reasons why an influenza vaccine is right for the patient given his or her age, health status, lifestyle, occupation, or other risk factors. CDC recommends annual vaccination for everyone 6 months and older with any licensed, age-appropriate flu vaccine with no preference expressed for one vaccine over another.

“This vaccine can protect you and your family from getting sick from flu. By getting a flu vaccine today, you’ll be protecting yourself and the people around you who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness, like your children and parents.”

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

“The CDC recommends that everyone get a flu vaccine each year. I always get one myself so I don’t pass along flu to my patients and my family members.”

A- ADDRESS patients’ questions and any concerns about influenza vaccines, including for example, side effects, safety, and vaccine effectiveness in plain and understandable language.

“A flu vaccine cannot cause flu infection. The most common side effects of an influenza vaccine are mild, like redness, swelling, soreness, or low-grade fever for a flu shot. 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 flu, including serious health effects and time lost (such as missing work or family obligations).

“It’s important to vaccinate your children this season because flu vaccination can reduce potential flu illnesses, doctor visits, hospitalizations and even death. Vaccination can also keep your children from missing school, and you from missing work due to flu.”

Types of Vaccines Available for Children 6 months-17 years

For the 2020-2021 flu season, providers may choose to administer any licensed, age appropriate flu vaccine – inactivated influenza vaccine (IIV4) or live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV4):

Vaccine type	Vaccine description	Recommended for*
Quadrivalent (4-component) Inactivated Influenza Vaccine (IIV4)	Injectable inactivated vaccine containing the influenza A(H1N1), (H3N2) and two influenza B lineage viruses predicted to be most common	People 6 months and older
Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine (LAIV4)	Intranasal live attenuated vaccine containing the influenza A(H1N1), (H3N2) and two influenza B lineage viruses predicted to be most common	Healthy non-pregnant people 2 through 49 years of age
Quadrivalent Cell Culture-Based Inactivated Influenza Vaccine (ccIIV4)	Injectable influenza vaccine produced without the use of influenza viruses or eggs; containing the influenza A(H1N1), (H3N2) and two influenza B lineage viruses predicted to be most common	People 4 years and older

*Licensed ages vary for different brands; consult package insert for appropriate ages for specific vaccines

For more information, visit: www.cdc.gov/flu
or call **1-800-CDC-INFO**