

Influenza vaccination is one of the best preventive health tools we have available to help reduce serious illness and hospitalization from the flu. **The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend annual flu shots for patients six months and older who do not have contraindications.**

This clinical guidance sheet outlines key information for family physicians and team members from the CDC's [Standards for Adult Immunization Practice](#). You can use this guidance to recommend influenza vaccination to your patients during any office visit throughout the flu season and promote increased patient acceptance and adherence.

Assess Immunization Status

- Ask about your patients' immunization status at every visit. Vaccination needs change over time, so be sure to include the patient's age, health conditions, lifestyle, travel, and occupation in your assessment.
- Stay up to date with CDC recommendations for immunization of adults and children.
- Generate immunization reminders for clinical staff and patients in the electronic health record (EHR).

Make a Clear and Strong Recommendation

- Strongly recommend that all patients six months and older who do not have contraindications receive the influenza vaccine each year.
- Identify the best influenza vaccine for each patient based on age, health conditions, lifestyle, travel, and occupation. Explain to your patient the reasons that you have tailored your recommendation to them.
- Highlight the benefits of vaccines, and remind patients that vaccines protect them and their loved ones.
- Describe the potential health effects and financial costs of becoming infected with the flu.

Educate Patients Early and Often

- Explain to your patients that the flu is a very common illness in the United States that infects millions of people, hospitalizes hundreds of thousands of people, and even kills tens of thousands of people each flu season.
- Discuss the safety and efficacy of the influenza vaccine with your patients. Tell them that getting a flu shot will protect them from the strains of flu virus included in all influenza vaccines for the flu season.
- Distribute the Vaccine Information Statement (VIS) for the influenza vaccine to your patients through your online portal or by mail, and offer a copy to read during the immunization visit, as a reminder.

Address Misinformation and Patient Concerns

- Prompt patients to ask any questions they have about the influenza vaccine, including its safety, side effects, and efficacy.
- Ask probing questions so you can better understand and address your patients' concerns and any reasons for vaccine hesitancy.
- Reassure patients that vaccines are required to go through rigorous research and testing to ensure that they are safe and effective.
- Emphasize that people cannot get the flu from the influenza vaccine.

Administer or Refer

- Educate your team members about proper influenza vaccine administration.
- Employ standing orders to empower nurses to administer the influenza vaccine for patients six months and older who do not have contraindications.
- Store vaccines appropriately, and use clear labels to differentiate between different brands and formulas.
- When you discuss the influenza vaccine with a patient who has not had a flu shot, recommend that they receive it during that visit. If you do not have the vaccine that your patient needs, refer them to another health care professional who can administer it.
- Report any adverse events after vaccination to the [Vaccine Adverse Events Reporting System \(VAERS\)](#).

Document

- Complete three key steps to accurately document the influenza vaccine given to your patient:
 - Record administration of the influenza vaccine in the patient's record.
 - Give influenza vaccine administration documentation to the patient for their personal medical records.
 - Submit influenza vaccine administration records to an immunization information system (IIS) as [required by your state](#).