

# Keep Patients Healthy with Flu Vaccine Recommendations

*Encourage patients to continue to protect their health during the COVID-19 crisis*

The 2021–2022 flu season will coincide with the continued spread of COVID-19. Patients ages 6 months and older who get the flu vaccine can reduce:

- ✓ Frequency of illness caused by the flu.
- ✓ Symptoms that might seem the same as those of COVID-19.
- ✓ Outpatient visits, hospital stays and intensive care unit admissions.

## Reassure patients about the flu vaccine

- **Give strong reasons to get their flu shot** and address any barriers.
  - Patients are more likely to get a flu shot if their doctor recommends it.
  - Provide the flu vaccine during appointments. Improve vaccination rates with walk-in flu vaccine clinics.
  - Address patients' health beliefs and perceptions about the flu vaccine. Remember to address barriers, such as perceived risk and susceptibility to the flu or the belief that they don't need a flu shot.

- **Use the SHARE method** to recommend flu vaccinations.
  - **SHARE** reasons to get the flu shot based on age or other risk factors.
  - **HIGHLIGHT** positive experiences with the flu shot that reinforce benefits.
  - **ADDRESS** concerns about the vaccine, such as side effects, safety and myths. Patients are less likely to push back.
  - **REMIND** patients that the flu shot protects them **and** everyone around them.
  - **EXPLAIN** that getting the flu can mean missing work or fun with family and friends.

*(continued)*



- **View a recorded webinar on vaccine hesitancy.**
  - Access a vaccine hesitancy webinar recording and slides at [www.healthnet.com/content/healthnet/en\\_us/providers/working-with-hn/provider-educational-webinar-calendar.html](http://www.healthnet.com/content/healthnet/en_us/providers/working-with-hn/provider-educational-webinar-calendar.html). Then scroll down to May 20, 2020, and select Evidence based communication strategies for promoting vaccination and addressing vaccine hesitancy (Zoom recording).

## Updates for the flu vaccine for 2021–2022

There is no preferred recommendation made for one flu vaccine product over another. Below are highlights of the latest recommendations<sup>1</sup> for this flu season:

- All persons ages 6 months and older should receive a routine annual flu vaccination with a licensed, recommended and age-appropriate vaccine, unless they have specific contraindications.<sup>2</sup>
- Offer vaccinations as soon as available, and ideally before the end of October. Continue to offer them through the season based on supply. The flu may not appear in some areas until February or March.

- View the full report of recommendations at [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/rr/rr7005a1.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/rr/rr7005a1.htm) for more information about:
  - Groups recommended for vaccination and the timing of vaccination.
  - Available vaccine products and indications. This includes recent regulatory actions on new vaccine licensures and labeling changes for previously licensed vaccines.
  - Vaccine dosage for children through older adults.
  - Guidance for use in specific populations and situations (high risk, caregivers, persons with COVID-19, pregnancy, history of Guillain-Barré, travelers).
  - Recommendations for people with an egg allergy.
  - Vaccine selection and timing of vaccinations for immunocompromised people.

**Note:** Different flu vaccine preparations have different indications as licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu) for the most current flu vaccine recommendations.



## How is the flu vaccine reimbursed?

The flu vaccine is reimbursed according to the terms of the *Provider Participation Agreement (PPA)* and the member's benefit plan.

## Reminder

California Health & Wellness Plan and delegated at-risk independent practice associations must cover the flu vaccine for all members as an essential preventive services benefit. It is not subject to prior authorization or cost share.

<sup>1</sup>Grohskopf LA, Alyanak E, Ferdinands JM, et al. Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, United States, 2021–22 Influenza Season. *MMWR Recomm Rep* 2021;70(No. RR-5):1–28. DOI: [www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/rr/rr7005a1.htm?s\\_cid=rr7005a1\\_w](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/rr/rr7005a1.htm?s_cid=rr7005a1_w).

<sup>2</sup>Various flu vaccine products are licensed and available from several different manufacturers. Go to the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/acip/2021-2022/acip-table.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/acip/2021-2022/acip-table.htm) for more information about available flu vaccines.