



BlueCross BlueShield
of Alabama

INFLUENZA VACCINES

A POWERFUL PREVENTION TOOL



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other leading health experts recommend that patients receive yearly flu vaccinations to combat flu season. Here are some tips and recommendations for discussing flu vaccines with your patients:

Why?

The flu vaccine is a critical step in **protecting your patients against flu viruses**. Additionally, studies show the flu vaccine can reduce the severity of illness in people who get vaccinated but still get sick, and it can reduce the number of hospitalizations and deaths.

Who?

The CDC recommends **everyone 6 months and older** get a flu vaccine every season with rare exceptions. These groups are especially vulnerable for high risk flu complications: infants and young children, children with neurologic conditions, pregnant women, adults age 65 years and older and persons with certain underlying medical conditions.

When?

To ensure lasting protection through the flu season, the CDC recommends getting the flu vaccine **beginning in September and October**. It's appropriate to vaccinate in January or even later if flu viruses are circulating.

Prevention Totals

The CDC says flu vaccination rates have been steadily declining in the U.S. since the pre-pandemic 2019-'20 season. Vaccinations continue to prove effective, preventing in the 2023-'24 flu season an estimated:

9.8 million flu-related illnesses

120,000 hospitalizations

7,900 deaths

4.8 million medical visits

Source: www.cdc.gov/flu-burden/php/data-vis-vac/2023-2024-prevented.html

Promote Healthy Habits

Remind your patients about these healthy habits that can minimize the spread of germs:

- Wash hands with soap and water.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Disinfect surfaces.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose and mouth.
- Limit close contact with others.