



What You Need to Know About the Flu Vaccine

Use this resource during huddles to increase staff knowledge of flu and the vaccine. It provides facts and questions to facilitate a group discussion to increase the number of patients receiving a flu vaccine.

Important Facts

- It is estimated that between 70 and 85 percent of seasonal flu-related deaths occur in people 65 years and older.¹ Dialysis patients of any age are at high risk because of their weakened immune systems.
- The flu vaccine is made from an inactivated virus that cannot transmit infection. It takes a week or two to gain protection from the vaccine. People who get sick after receiving a flu vaccination were likely exposed prior to the two-week immune system protection that the vaccine provides.
- Here are steps both patients and staff can take to protect themselves during flu season:
 - If you live with someone who has the flu, do your best to isolate from them
 - Wear a mask in populated indoor areas
 - Wash hands frequently
 - Use hand sanitizer in the absence of soap and water
- The strain of the influenza virus changes each year. Getting vaccinated each year is important to make sure people have immunity to the strains most likely to cause the flu.
- The flu vaccine has one of the best safety records of any vaccine, and most side effects are mild. The most common complaint after flu vaccination is soreness and tenderness at the injection site.
- It is important that End State Renal Disease (ESRD) patients receive the flu vaccine because they are at risk of developing complications from the flu.

Facilitate Communication

- Think about what you can do to protect yourself, your family, and your patients from getting the flu.
- Ask yourself, “How might we get more patients to take the flu vaccine?”
- What might you say to a patient that is hesitant to take the flu vaccine?

Resources

- [Get Your Flu Shot: Not Flu](#)

¹Flu & People 65 Years and Older, www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/65over.htm