

Emphasize the Importance of Flu Vaccination in 2021-2022

It'll be all hands on deck for **flu vaccines in 2021-2022**...as COVID-19 continues and experts warn of a possible severe flu season.

One concern is that the low number of influenza cases last season may lessen immunity...and lead to increased severity this year.

Vaccinate now...and continue as long as flu is circulating.

Be aware, CDC now recommends against giving a flu vaccine to most patients in July and August...due to potential waning immunity. But don't give a flu "booster" regardless of when patients got this year's vaccine.

Leverage your techs to help share the load. For instance, federal guidance now authorizes qualified techs to administer adult flu vaccines.

Vaccines. Educate that all flu vaccines will be quadrivalent this season...with 2 updated A strains and the same 2 B strains as last year.

Compare products in our chart, *Flu Vaccines for 2021-22*.

For example, explain that *Fluad* or *Fluzone High-Dose* is approved for patients 65 and older...to try to improve the immune response.

Or if you stock *FluMist*, consider it an option for healthy, nonpregnant patients 2 through 49...especially if they refuse injections.

But clarify that there's no preference for one vaccine over another.

Effectiveness. Patients will hear that flu vaccines are only 40% to 60% effective...versus about 90% for mRNA COVID-19 vaccines.

But point out that these comparisons aren't apples to apples.

This is partly because each flu season is different...and we're still learning about COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness over time.

Remind patients of the big picture...COVID-19 and flu vaccines significantly reduce the risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death. Emphasize getting BOTH vaccinations to protect against each virus.

Co-administration. Help patients catch up on other needed immunizations (COVID-19, pneumococcal, Tdap, etc) at the same visit.

Try to use different arms, especially with vaccines that might cause more local reactions...such as COVID-19 with *Fluad* or *Fluzone High-Dose*.

Get our FAQ, *Flu Vaccination*, for answers about immunizing patients who are pregnant, feel sick, report an egg allergy, etc.

Key References:

- MMWR Recomm Rep 2021;70(5):1-28
- www.cdc.gov/flu/season/faq-flu-season-2021-2022.htm (9-23-21)

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-www.cdc.gov/flu/vaccines-work/vaccineeffect.htm (9-23-21)
-JAMA 2021;326(10):899-900

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