

# INFLUENZA AND COVID-19 TALKING POINTS FOR LONG-TERM CARE SETTINGS

**Vaccinating against flu and COVID-19 are simple actions that long-term care staff, residents, and their families can take to protect each other against both diseases.**

- CDC estimates that flu causes hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and between 12,000-61,000 deaths each flu season. A bad flu season combined with a COVID-19 surge can put long-term care residents at higher risk for serious illness.
- Influenza and COVID-19 share many symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, fatigue, difficulty breathing, headaches, muscle pain, etc.). Preventing influenza and COVID-19 means fewer people will need to seek medical care and testing.
- It is likely that both COVID-19 and flu will circulate this fall and winter.
- Many people at higher risk for serious flu illness are also at higher risk for serious illness due to COVID-19. Getting immunized against flu and COVID-19 could save your life and protect your loved ones!
- Protect yourself and those around you – Complete a COVID-19 vaccine series and get recommended boosters as well as a yearly flu shot.
- Together through vaccination, residents and staff can prevent severe illness, hospitalization, and death due to flu and COVID-19.
- Flu vaccination reduces the risk of hospitalization due to flu.
- It is safe and convenient to get COVID-19 and flu vaccines on the same day.
- Even if you have already gotten a COVID-19 vaccine, you are still recommended to get a flu vaccine.
- CDC now preferentially recommends high dose, recombinant or adjuvanted flu vaccines over other flu vaccines for adults 65 years and older.
- Flu and COVID-19 vaccination will help lower the burden on the health care system by decreasing serious illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths.
- Depending on your age and health conditions, you can talk to your doctor about which flu and pneumonia shots you need for best protection.

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- Older adults, smokers, or anyone with a chronic health condition (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease) are at higher risk for flu-related complications. Get your flu shot now - we are stronger together when we are all protected against flu.

**Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu shot, especially those who are most vulnerable. This includes:**

- People 50 years and older, who account for the majority of hospitalizations and deaths from flu and COVID-19.
- Adults aged 40 and older have a ten times greater risk of a first heart attack and an eight times greater risk of a first stroke after getting flu.
- People with underlying medical conditions like lung disease, heart disease, neurologic disorders, weakened immune systems, and diabetes.
- African Americans, Latinx and Native populations are at increased risk for chronic medical conditions that can lead to severe flu or COVID-19.

**If you work in a health care setting, vaccination against COVID-19 and flu is especially important.**

- Flu and COVID-19 vaccination is important for health care workers and others who live with or take care of vulnerable people to prevent spreading flu and COVID-19 to them.
- Caregivers in long-term care facilities who are in daily close contact with residents are more vulnerable to serious flu and COVID-19 illness and death.
- Staff members: Consult with your team and review standing orders to determine vaccination assessment and administration at patient intake.