

**TO:** EZIZ Users  
**FROM:** CDPH  
**SUBJECT:** Communicating with Patients about Flu  
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## Communicating with Patients about Flu Vaccination: Overcoming Barriers

### When your patients say...

#### **“I got vaccinated last year and got sick anyway.”**

- Many other germs besides the flu cause symptoms similar to flu – you might have caught one of them.
- The Flu Vaccine takes 2 weeks to work; you may have been infected before you had immunity.

#### **“The flu shot gave me the flu.”**

- Flu shots are made with killed virus that cannot give you the flu. Sometimes your body’s immune response after vaccination can make you feel a little ill, and that’s normal—it just means your body’s defenses are working.

#### **“Flu vaccine is not effective. why bother?”**

- Circulating viruses change every year. Last year, the flu vaccine was [36%-67% effective](#).
- Flu is very serious and can cause pneumonia, hospitalization and death.
- Even though the flu vaccine is not 100% effective, vaccination may make your illness milder
- Two studies in 2017 showed [flu vaccination](#)

[resulted in fewer complications](#) like hospital or ICU stays for adults, and [lowered the risk of death for children by over 50%](#).

### **“The flu is just like a bad cold—it’s not serious.”**

- Flu is sometimes confused with a cold. Flu viruses are *not* the same as a cold. When a person catches the flu, they often have a fever and bodyaches; most also have to miss days of work or school. When complications set in, flu can be life-threatening. While babies, pregnant women, those with certain health conditions, and seniors are at highest risk, healthy people of any age can die from flu.
- The CDC estimates that more than 900,000 people were hospitalized and more than 80,000 people died from flu in the 2017-2018 season.

### **“I’m healthy and have never had the flu. I don’t need a flu shot.”**

- Flu viruses mutate very fast from year to year. That means things can change. Every year, healthy people who have never caught the flu before suddenly get it.

#### **Scarlet’s Story**



Scarlet died at age 5 from flu complications. She did not get a flu vaccine. *“The flu vaccination is not 100%. But I’d take 7%. I’d take 50%. I’d take 3%...The hardest part is knowing there are preventative measures I could have taken to possibly have saved her life.”* Scarlet’s mom

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