

2021-22 INFLUENZA VACCINATION TALKING POINTS

FOR DRAFTING SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES, PRESS RELEASES, ARTICLES AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS:

Getting a flu vaccine is one easy action to take to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community from flu.

- Just like wearing a mask and social distancing, getting a flu shot is an easy way to help you and your family stay healthy.
- It is likely that both COVID-19 and flu will circulate this fall and winter.
- Many people at higher risk for serious flu illness also seem to be 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!
- Flu vaccination will help lower the burden on the health care system by decreasing flu illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths.
- Influenza and COVID-19 share many symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, fatigue, difficulty breathing, headaches, muscle pain, etc.). Preventing influenza means fewer people will need to seek medical care and testing for possible COVID-19 or influenza.
- CDC estimates that flu causes hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and 12,000-61,000 deaths each flu season. While it's always important to minimize this toll, it's especially important this season. A bad flu season combined with COVID-19 can put vulnerable populations at higher risk for illness.
- In the 2019-2020 flu season, influenza sent up to 740,000 people to the hospital with flu complications and an estimated 62,000 deaths in the United States.
- Depending on your age and health conditions, you can talk to your doctor about flu shot options that may be right for you. You can receive any flu vaccine product that you are eligible for.
- Flu vaccination is important for health care workers and others who live with or take care of vulnerable people to prevent spreading flu to them.
- Essential workers, including nurses and doctors, continue to do their part to keep us healthy. Now it's time for us to do our part by rolling up our sleeves and getting vaccinated against flu and COVID-19.

Medical providers are taking every precaution to keep you safe, wherever you plan to get vaccinated.

- During the pandemic, hospitals, clinics, and other settings across the state have taken additional measures to ensure patients are safe when getting vaccinated.
- Your medical team is making it safe to come in for an appointment. Ask them about their COVID-19 safety measures, including separating appointment times for sick and healthy patients, disinfecting between appointments, and physical distancing.

Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu shot, especially our most vulnerable community members.

- Flu vaccination lowers the chances that children and adults will end up in the hospital when they catch the flu.
- Flu can lower your body's defenses to other infections, including COVID-19. Older adults, smokers, or anyone with a chronic health condition like asthma, diabetes, or heart disease are especially at risk. Get your flu shot now – we are stronger together when we are all protected against flu.
- Last flu season, there was lower than normal spread of flu. This year, as California opens up, there will likely be more flu circulating. Stay safe and protected by getting immunized against flu!

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- While flu vaccination is always important, this season getting vaccinated is even more important for certain people who are at higher risk of being exposed to flu and COVID-19 or developing serious complications from flu and COVID-19. 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 catching flu.
 - People with underlying medical conditions like lung disease, heart disease, neurologic disorders, weakened immune systems, and diabetes.
 - African Americans, Latinx and Native populations, who are disproportionately affected by chronic medical conditions that can increase the risk for serious flu and COVID-19.
 - Caregivers in long-term care facilities—in addition to residents—who are in daily close contact with people who are most vulnerable to serious flu and COVID-19 illness and death.
 - Essential workers who have frequent interactions with each other and/or the public and are therefore more likely to be exposed to flu and COVID-19.
- Getting vaccinated yourself will also protect your loved ones, including those who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness, like babies and young children, older people, pregnant people, and people with chronic health conditions.

Don't Wait—Vaccinate!

- We are stronger when we are all protected. Call your doctor to get your flu shot today.
- For those who are out of work or without health insurance, you and your child can still get vaccinated. The Vaccines for Children (VFC) program offers free vaccines to families who cannot afford to pay for their children's vaccines (through 18 years of age). Visit [vaccine.org](https://www.vaccine.org) to find a place nearby to get your flu shot.
- According to CDC, 80% of adults 55 years of age and older have at least one chronic condition. Flu can be deadly for people with chronic conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, and asthma. Learn more about flu at Don't Wait Vaccinate Campaign.

Reopening CA State: School, Recreation Centers, Businesses, etc.

- With California reopening in 2021, it is critical to get a flu shot to prevent the spread of flu and its most serious complications.
- With schools, after school programs, and recreational centers reopening, medical providers are emphasizing the importance of flu vaccine for children. Make a flu shot appointment with your child's medical provider now to help protect them throughout the school year.
- As California reopens and there is less social distancing, getting a flu shot is the most effective way to help protect yourself and your loved ones against flu.