

# These influenza educational materials will help protect your patients as well as staff

**1** **Influenza: Questions and Answers**  
INFORMATION ABOUT THE DISEASE AND VACCINES

**What causes influenza?**  
Viruses cause influenza. There are two basic types, A and B, which can cause clinical illness in humans. Their genetic material differentiates them. Influenza A can cause moderate to severe illness in all age groups and infect humans and other animals. Influenza B causes mild disease and affects only humans, primarily children.

**In the United States, the number of influenza-associated deaths has increased since 1990. This increase is due in part to the substantial increase in the number of people age 65 years or older who are at increased risk for death from influenza complications.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that from the 1976-77 influenza season to the 2006-07 season, influenza-associated deaths ranged from a low of about 3,300 to a high of about 49,000 each year. It is

**2** **Don't take chances with your family's health – make sure you all get vaccinated against influenza every year!**

**Here's how influenza can hurt your family...**

**Influenza can make you, your children, or your parents really sick.**

**Influenza usually comes on suddenly.** Symptoms can include high fever, chills, headaches, exhaustion, sore throat, cough, and all-over body aches. Regardless, when influenza strikes your family, the result is lost work and school.

**Influenza spreads easily from person to person.** An infected person can spread influenza when they cough, sneeze, or talk near others. They can also spread it by touching or sneezing that someone else touches later. And, an infected person does not have to be contagious; they can spread influenza to others when well – before their symptoms have even begun.

**3** **Seek emergency medical care if you or a family member shows the signs below – a life could be at risk!**

**It's a fact – every year, people of all ages in the U.S. die from influenza and its complications.**

**Emergency warning signs for children or teens with influenza:** Any child or teen who shows the following emergency warning signs needs urgent medical attention – take them to the hospital.

**4** **Protect yourself from influenza... Get vaccinated!**

**What is influenza?** Influenza (flu) is a serious disease caused by a virus. Influenza can make you feel miserable! Fever, cough, shaking chills, body aches, and extreme weakness are common symptoms.

**How do you catch it?** You can catch influenza from people who cough, sneeze, or even just talk around you. It is very contagious.

**Is it serious?** Yes! Tragically, every year infants, children, teens, and adults die from influenza.

**Get your influenza vaccination every year!** Influenza is very unpredictable. No one knows how deadly influenza will be each year. Even if you have a mild case of influenza, you can still pass the virus on to your friends, family, and coworkers who could get very sick or even die.

**Am I at risk?** Yes. Influenza is most dangerous for people with health conditions like heart and lung disease, the very young and very old, and pregnant women. But anyone can become seriously sick from influenza – even young, healthy people.

**How can I protect myself from influenza?** Vaccination is the best way to prevent influenza. Everyone age 6 months and older should get vaccinated against influenza every year. Vaccination not only protects the person who gets immunized, it also protects the people around them – for example, babies who are too young to be vaccinated.

**For more information, visit [www.vaccineinformation.org](http://www.vaccineinformation.org)**

**5** **Declination of Influenza Vaccination**

My employer or affiliated health facility, \_\_\_\_\_, has recommended that I receive influenza vaccination to protect the patients I serve.

I acknowledge that I am aware of the following facts:

- Influenza is a serious respiratory disease that kills thousands of people in the United States each year.
- Influenza vaccination is recommended for me and all other healthcare workers to protect the patients I serve.
- If I become infected, my shedding of the virus could harm the patients I serve.
- The consequences to my health are:
  - all patients I serve could be exposed
  - my family could be exposed
  - my community could be exposed

Despite these facts, I have decided:

I understand that I am still available to work for \_\_\_\_\_.

I have read and understand the consequences of my decision.

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Department: \_\_\_\_\_

**6** **Keep your kids safe – get them vaccinated every fall or winter!**

**Is influenza more serious for kids?** Infants and young children are at risk for getting seriously ill from influenza. That's why health experts recommend that all children 6 months and older and all adults get vaccinated against influenza each fall or winter.

**Influenza vaccine may save your child's life.** Most people with influenza are sick for about a week, and then they feel better. But, some people, especially young children, pregnant women, older people, and people with chronic health problems can get very sick. Some even die. A yearly vaccination against influenza is the best way to protect your child from this serious disease. It is recommended for everyone 6 months and older.

**What is influenza?** Influenza, or "flu," is an infection of the nose, throat, and lungs. It can easily spread from person to person.

**What types of vaccine are available for children?**

- Influenza shots can be given to children 6 months and older.
- The nasal-spray influenza vaccine can be given to healthy children 2 years and older. It can provide better protection in healthy children ages 2 through 8 years and is preferred for children of this age if it is available in the office or clinic; however, if your clinic doesn't have the vaccine, your child should get the influenza shot.
- Children younger than 2 years who have had wheezing in the past year—or any child with chronic health problems—should get the injectable vaccine (a shot), not the nasal-spray vaccine.
- Children younger than 2 years old who are getting influenza vaccine for the first time need two doses separated by a week.

**How else can I protect my child?**

- Every year, get an influenza vaccination yourself.
- Use your child's close contacts to get vaccinated, too. This is extremely important if your child is younger than 2 or if he or she has a chronic health problem such as asthma or diabetes. Because children younger than 6 months can't be vaccinated, they rely on those around them to get vaccinated.
- Wash your hands often and cover your coughs and sneezes. It's best to use a tissue and quickly throw it away. If you don't have a tissue, you should cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands. This will prevent the spread of germs.
- Tell your children to:
  - Stay away from people who are sick.
  - Wash their hands often.
  - Keep their hands away from their face, and
  - Cover coughs and sneezes to protect others.

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**8** **Influenza Vaccination of People with a History of Egg Allergy**

Recommendations regarding influenza vaccination of persons who report allergy to eggs... Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, United States, 2015-16 influenza season

Can the person get an egg allergy? (yes/no/unknown)

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**9** **Guide for Determining the Number of Doses of Influenza Vaccine to Give to Children Age 6 Months Through 8 Years During the 2015-2016 Influenza Season**

Did the child receive at least 2 doses of trivalent or quadrivalent influenza vaccine<sup>a</sup> before July 1, 2015?

YES → Give 1 dose of 2015-16 influenza vaccine this season.

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