

# Make a Strong Flu Vaccine Recommendation

FIGHT FLU



## Information for Health Care Professionals

**CDC recommends everyone 6 months and older get an influenza (flu) vaccine every year. Vaccination is especially important for people 65 years and older because of their high risk of developing serious complications from flu.**

### Your Vaccine Recommendation is Critical

As a health care professional (HCP), your strong recommendation is a critical factor in whether your patients get a flu vaccine. Research indicates that most adults are likely to get their flu vaccine if their doctor or health care professional recommends it to them. Most adults believe vaccines are important, but they need a reminder from you to get vaccinated

### Adults 65 and Older Need a Flu Vaccine

People 65 years and older are at high risk of serious, flu-related complications because their immune systems become weaker with age. In addition, patients that have an underlying medical condition such as diabetes or heart disease have an additional factor putting them at risk of serious complications from influenza.

- During recent seasons, approximately 70% to 90% of seasonal flu-related deaths in the United States have occurred among people 65 years and older.
- In recent years, about 50% to 70% of seasonal flu-related hospitalizations have occurred among people 65 years and older



### When to Vaccinate

- CDC recommends that vaccination should be offered by the end of October. However, vaccination should continue throughout flu season as long as flu viruses are circulating, even into January or later.
- If you do not offer vaccine at your facility, make a flu vaccine referral, and then follow up with each patient during subsequent appointments to ensure they got vaccinated. If the patient remains unvaccinated, repeat the recommendation/referral and try to identify and address any questions or concerns.

### How to Make a Strong Flu Vaccine Recommendation

Based on years of research into vaccine motivators, CDC has developed a mnemonic device to help HCPs make a strong vaccine recommendation. This method known as “SHARE” can help you to make a strong vaccine recommendation and provide important information to help patients make informed decisions about vaccinations.

**S- SHARE** the reasons why an influenza vaccine is right for the patient given his or her age, health status, lifestyle, occupation, or other risk factors. CDC recommends annual vaccination for everyone 6 months and older with any licensed, age-appropriate flu vaccine with no preference expressed for one vaccine over another.

*“You are older than 65 years and that puts you at high risk of being hospitalized or dying from flu. By getting vaccinated today, you’ll be protecting yourself and other people around you who may be more vulnerable to serious flu illness, like your grandchildren.”*



**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**H- HIGHLIGHT** positive experiences with influenza vaccines (personal or in your practice), as appropriate, to reinforce the benefits and strengthen confidence in flu vaccination.

*“The CDC recommends that everyone get a flu vaccine each year. I always get one myself so I don’t pass along flu to my patients and my family members.”*

**A- ADDRESS** patients’ questions and any concerns about influenza vaccines, including for example, side effects, safety, and vaccine effectiveness in plain and understandable language.

*“A flu vaccine cannot cause flu infection. The most common side effects of an influenza vaccine are mild, like redness, swelling, soreness, or low-grade fever for a flu shot. This should go away within a few days.”*

**R- REMIND** patients that influenza vaccines protect them and their loved ones from serious flu illness and flu-related complications.

*“Flu activity is going to start to pick up, and CDC says to expect more cases in the coming months. That is why I want to make sure I help protect you and your loved ones.”*

**E- EXPLAIN** the potential costs of getting flu, including serious health effects, time lost (such as missing work or family obligations).

*“It’s important to get vaccinated this season because flu vaccination can reduce potential flu illnesses, doctor visits, and missed work and school due to flu.”*

## Types of Vaccines Available for Adults 65 and older

For the 2019-2020 flu season, providers may choose to administer any licensed, age-appropriate flu vaccine -- inactivated influenza vaccine (IIV3 or IIV4) or recombinant influenza vaccine (RIV4):

| Vaccine type   | Vaccine description  | Recommended for*          |
|--|--|---------------------------|
| Quadrivalent (4-component) Inactivated Influenza Vaccine (IIV4)        | Injectable inactivated vaccine containing the influenza A(H1N1), (H3N2) and two influenza B lineage viruses predicted to be most common  | People 6 months and older |
| Quadrivalent Cell Culture-Based Inactivated Influenza Vaccine (ccIIV4) | Injectable inactivated influenza vaccine manufactured using cell culture rather than eggs, containing the influenza A(H1N1), (H3N2) and two influenza B lineage viruses predicted to be most common  | People 4 years and older  |
| Quadrivalent Recombinant Influenza Vaccine (RIV4)                      | Injectable influenza vaccine produced without the use of influenza viruses or eggs; contains the influenza A(H1N1), (H3N2) and two influenza B lineage viruses predicted to be most common   | Adults 18 years and older |
| Trivalent Adjuvanted Inactivated Influenza Vaccine (aIIV3)             | Injectable inactivated influenza vaccine containing MF59 adjuvant, designed to help promote a stronger immune response in older adults; contains the influenza A(H1N1), (H3N2) and one influenza B virus predicted to be most common   | Adults 65 years and older |
| Trivalent High-Dose Inactivated Influenza Vaccine (HD-IIV3)            | Injectable inactivated influenza vaccine containing four times the antigen of a standard-dose influenza vaccine, designed to help promote a stronger immune response in older adults; contains the influenza A(H1N1), (H3N2) and one influenza B virus predicted to be most common | Adults 65 years and older |

\*Licensed ages vary for different brands; consult package insert for appropriate ages for specific vaccines

For more information, visit: [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu)  
or call 1-800-CDC-INFO