

Flu Shot Talking Points

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The 2025 flu season is underway, and the flu vaccine remains one of the most effective ways to protect patients and keep them healthy. Unfortunately, myths and concerns about the flu shot continue to discourage some individuals from getting vaccinated.

As trusted medical providers, you play a key role in educating patients and addressing vaccine hesitancy. Below are common myths and facts you can share to help reassure your patients:

Common Myths and Concerns

- **“The shot will give me the flu.”**

The flu shot cannot cause flu illness. It is made with either an inactivated flu virus or no flu virus at all. The most common side effects are soreness at the injection site, low-grade fever, and body aches—typically resolving within two days.

- **“The flu shot is more dangerous than the flu.”**

The flu can be fatal, especially for older adults, young children, and individuals with chronic conditions. One shot can help protect patients and may reduce the severity of illnesses if they do get the flu.

- **“Young and healthy people don’t need the flu shot.”**

The CDC recommends that everyone aged 6 months and older receive a flu shot each season. Healthy individuals can still spread the virus to those who are more vulnerable.

- **“You don’t need a flu shot every year.”**

Annual vaccination is necessary because the vaccine’s effectiveness decreases over time, and its formulation is updated each year to target the most prevalent strains.

- **“Flu shots don’t work, people still get the flu.”**

While the flu shot does not guarantee immunity, it significantly lowers the risk of infection and helps ensure that those who do get sick experience a milder illness.

- **“There’s mercury in flu shots.”**

Thimerosal, which contains ethyl mercury, was previously used in multi-dose vials to prevent contamination. Ethyl mercury is not harmful in small doses. However, the CDC has banned thimerosal in all vaccines.

Neighborhood members can receive a flu shot at no cost.

Health care professionals are the most trusted source of vaccine information. Discussing vaccine safety and addressing concerns with patients and families can make a meaningful difference.