

Take On a Bigger Role With Flu Vaccines in 2021-2022

It'll be all hands on deck for **flu vaccines in 2021-2022**...as COVID-19 continues and experts warn of a possible severe flu season.

One concern is that the low number of flu cases last season may lessen immunity...and lead to increased severity this year.

You can do a lot to help. For example, consider taking the lead on prepping supplies...sanitizing work areas...and documenting.

Offer patients a flu vaccine as soon as you have it in stock...and continue as long as flu is circulating.

Vaccines. Be aware, almost all flu vaccines will be quadrivalent...with two updated influenza A strains and the same two B strains as last year.

Continue to dispense any product that's appropriate for your patient's age and health status.

For instance, *Fluad* or *Fluzone High-Dose* is specifically approved for patients 65 and older. Be aware that *Fluzone High-Dose* is quadrivalent this year...and each dose is 0.7 mL instead of 0.5 mL.

Make note of updated age approvals. *Flucelvax Quad* is now approved for kids 2 and up...and *Influvac Tetra* can now be used for kids 3 and up.

Keep options straight with our chart, Flu Vaccines for 2021-22.

Effectiveness. Patients will hear that flu vaccines are only 40% to 60% effective...versus about 90% for mRNA COVID-19 vaccines.

But these comparisons aren't apples to apples.

It's partly because each flu season is different...and we're still learning about COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness over time.

Bring in your pharmacist to share the big picture...COVID-19 and flu vaccines significantly reduce risk of severe illness, hospitalization, and death.

Urge getting BOTH vaccinations to protect against each virus.

Other immunizations. Help patients catch up on other needed vaccines (pneumococcal, Tdap, etc). These can be administered at the same visit.

Keep in mind, national guidance now advises that COVID-19 vaccines can be given at the same time as, or any time before or after other vaccines, including the flu vaccine.

Brush up on vaccine storage, billing, and more with our technician tutorial, The Basics of Immunization and Vaccines.

Key References:

-www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/vaccines-immunization/canadian-immunization-guide-statement-seasonal-influenza-vaccine-2021-2022.html?hq_e=el&hq_m=2185668&hq_l=1&hq_v=42f995eed6#a8 (9-30-21)

-www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/recommendations-use-covid-19-vaccines/summary-updates-september-28-2021.html (9-30-21)

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-www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/immunization/national-advisory-committee-on-immunization-naci/recommendations-use-covid-19-vaccines.html#a7.7 (9-30-21)

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