

Tips for Discussing Flu Vaccine with Your Patients

I. Establish empathy and credibility

- We have all heard lots of things about vaccines, good and bad.
- As your doctor, I know that you want to make the best choices about vaccines for you and your family.
- I know there is a lot of information out there, and it is difficult to figure out who to trust.
- Let me share with you what I have learned from my experience and what I share with my patients about seasonal influenza, or flu for short, and flu vaccines.

II. Articulate disease risks and susceptibility

- Flu is a virus that is spread by droplets in the air – such as through sneezing and coughing.
- Flu can cause a sore throat, fever, headache and cough. It can also cause more severe illness, such as pneumonia and sinus infections. Nearly 80,000 people died from the flu last year.
- Pregnant women and infants are at high risk of developing serious complications from the flu and dying from the flu.

III. Outline issues related to vaccine safety

- The great news about the flu is that there are vaccines.
- Influenza vaccines are developed every year, to match the seasonal strain. You should receive a flu vaccine every year as soon as it is available to protect yourself.
- Influenza vaccines are very safe. After getting a flu vaccine, one may experience soreness or a fever, but these reactions usually resolve in a few days. Serious complications from the flu vaccine are very, very rare.

IV. Convey vaccine efficacy

- Influenza vaccines are designed to help protect against seasonal influenza.

V. Encourage self-efficacy and action

- You and I have the same goal: to protect you and your family. I strongly recommend flu vaccines.
- You have the power to protect you and your family from the flu. If the current seasonal vaccine is available, schedule an appointment today to receive this vaccine.