



**Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
National Medicare, Medicaid and CHIP Flu Education Campaign**

Get the Flu Vaccination--not the Flu! No Cost – No Excuses

The Food and Drug Administration recently announced that it has approved vaccines for the 2012-2013 influenza seasons and that the seasonal influenza vaccine protects against three strains of influenza:

- A/California/7/2009 (H1N1) pdm09-like virus
- A/Victoria/361/2011 (H3N2)-like virus
- B/Wisconsin/1/2010-like virus

As a health care provider, you are the first line of defense in communicating to your patients the importance of getting vaccinated. It is equally important for you and your health care staff to be vaccinated as well. Key messages to share with your patients include:

- The flu vaccine is available at no additional out-of-pocket cost for Medicare patients and for children eligible for Medicaid and CHIP. There is no coinsurance or copayment applied to this benefit, and they will not have to meet their deductible.
- The flu vaccine can prevent the flu; it does not give people the flu. Getting a flu vaccine is the best thing you can do to keep you from getting sick this flu season. Additionally, by protecting yourself, you are also protecting those you care about from getting the flu from you.
- All children over the age of 6 months and adults, especially those that are 65 years and older, and people who are under 65 who have chronic illness, including heart disease, lung disease, diabetes or end-stage renal disease should get a flu vaccine.
- Refer your patients to www.medicare.gov or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) to get a free copy of “Staying Healthy: Medicare’s Preventive Services.” TTY users should call 1-877-486-2048. Additionally, for non-Medicare patients, beginning Sept. 23, 2010, health plans will be required to cover recommended preventive services without charging copayments, co-insurance or deductibles.

Helpful tips for patients to follow during flu season:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. If you don’t have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners also work.

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Stay home if you are sick until at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever (100 degrees Fahrenheit or 37.8 degrees Celsius) or signs of a fever (without the use of a fever-reducing medicine).

The website www.flu.gov has resources to help health care professionals stay informed about the latest flu information. Please visit the following link for additional provider resources on immunizations: www.cms.gov/Immunizations/. More information is available at www.healthcare.gov.

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