



Infection Prevention & Flu Updates

AFL 20-80: Recommendations for the Prevention and Control of Influenza during COVID-19 Pandemic

- <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/LCP/Pages/AFL-20-80.aspx>
- All SNFs should review [Recommendations for the Prevention and Control of Influenza in California SNFs during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
 - Similarities and differences between influenza viruses and SARS-CoV-2
 - Recommendations for planning for influenza illness and outbreaks
 - Recommendations for identifying and controlling influenza outbreaks



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GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor

AFL 20-80

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TO: Skilled Nursing Facilities

SUBJECT: Recommendations for the Prevention and Control of Influenza during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

All Facilities Letter (AFL) Summary

This AFL provides recommendations to prevent and manage influenza outbreaks in skilled nursing facilities (SNFs) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2020-21 INFLUENZA VACCINATION TALKING POINTS

FOR DRAFTING SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES, PRESS RELEASES, ARTICLES AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS:

Getting a flu vaccine is more important than ever to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your community from flu.

- Just like wearing a mask, getting a flu shot is an easy and safe action we can take to keep ourselves and others healthy during the pandemic.
- We may not have a vaccine for COVID-19 yet, but we do have one for flu that is effective and safe.
- It is likely that both COVID-19 and flu will be circulating this fall and winter. Getting immunized against flu means there is one less disease you and your doctor have to worry about this season.
- This season, getting a flu vaccine is especially important because it will protect against flu and help save limited medical resources for COVID-19 patients.
- Influenza and COVID-19 share many symptoms. Preventing influenza means fewer people will need to seek medical care and testing for possible COVID-19 or influenza.
- CDC estimates that flu causes hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and 12,000-61,000 deaths each season. While it's always important to minimize this toll, it's especially important this season. A bad flu season combined with COVID-19 can put our front-line workers at higher risk for illness.
- Essential workers, including nurses and doctors, are doing their part to keep us healthy. Now it's time for us to do our part by rolling up our sleeves and getting vaccinated.

Medical providers are taking every precaution to keep you safe, wherever you plan to get vaccinated.

- We understand you may feel a little uneasy about coming into the doctor's office, pharmacy or flu clinic this year. Hospitals, clinics and other settings across the state have taken additional safety measures to ensure patients are safe when getting vaccinated.
- Additional safety measures include separating appointment times for sick and healthy patients, masking requirements, additional disinfecting between appointments, physical distancing in waiting areas and many other measures to make sure patients stay safe. Some clinics offer drive-through services, so you can get care without leaving your car.

Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu shot, especially our most vulnerable community members.

- Flu vaccination lowers the chances that children and adults will end up in the hospital when they catch the flu.
- Healthy adults can get very sick from flu, just like from COVID-19. Both are most dangerous for older adults, smokers, or anyone with a chronic condition like asthma, diabetes, or heart disease. Get a flu shot now – we are stronger together when we are all protected against flu.
- Flu can lower your body's defenses to other infections, including COVID-19. Older adults, smokers, or anyone with a chronic condition like asthma, diabetes, or heart disease are especially at risk. Don't take chances with flu – get your flu shot now.
- A flu vaccine helps protect the frontline health care workers who will be caring for a lot of people sick with respiratory illnesses this fall and winter. Now it's time for us to do our part by rolling up our sleeves and getting vaccinated against the flu.



Ensure Workers and Residents are Protected with Flu Vaccine. They're Counting on You!

This year, it's more important than ever to ensure that all workers and residents in long-term care facilities are protected against influenza. Residents are very vulnerable to severe illness and death from either COVID-19 or flu. Flu can weaken the immune system, making residents more vulnerable to pneumonia and other infections.

Workers are vulnerable to getting flu through contact with family and community members. Wearing a mask at work is not enough to prevent flu. [Flu and COVID-19 symptoms often look alike](#) – staff with symptoms will likely have to get tested for both and miss workdays. While flu vaccines do not prevent COVID-19, they do reduce illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths due to flu and preserve limited medical resources to care for people with COVID-19. Getting immunized against flu means there is one less illness to worry about this season.

Flu vaccination is the best way to protect against flu. We are stronger when we are all protected! The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) urges your facility to take the following steps:

- Make it easy for workers in your facility to [get flu vaccine](#)
 - Offer flu vaccine onsite on multiple days/shifts or refer workers to a convenient location offsite
 - Don't forget to document flu vaccination and declinations. Follow-up on declinations and address any barriers such as access to vaccine or vaccine hesitancy.
- Ensure patients are protected with flu vaccine:
 - Check immunization status of residents during admission.
 - Run a report of residents that need a flu vaccine using your Electronic Health Record (EHR) system, if applicable. Flag charts to follow-up on residents not vaccinated. Continue vaccinating throughout the flu season.
 - [Make a strong recommendation](#) (e.g., "Flu can cause serious problems for someone with your condition. Let's make sure you're protected and get your shot taken care of today").
 - [Address resident concerns](#) (e.g., "Flu shots are made from weak or dead viruses and cannot give you the flu. Flu shots may cause mild side effects that may be confused with infection").
 - Document recommendation and receipt of vaccination or declination. For residents or family members who decline, repeat recommendation at the next opportunity.

- Create a culture that promotes flu vaccination:
 - Share [#DontWaitVaccinate Flu Campaign](#) images/messages via your social media channels
 - Provide stickers/buttons for employee badges like [these stickers](#) for [1.5" Avery labels \(94506\)](#).
 - Post the following [resources](#) at your facility:
 - i. [If You Work in a Healthcare Setting, Get Your Flu Vaccine | Spanish](#)
 - ii. ["I Won't Spread Flu" flyer \(CDC\)](#)
- Stay informed of the latest influenza guidelines:
 - [Frequently Asked Questions for the 2020-21 Influenza Season \(CDC\)](#)
 - [Healthcare-Associated Infections Program resources page \(CDPH\)](#)
 - [Prevention Strategies for Seasonal Influenza in Healthcare Settings \(CDC\)](#)



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Resources—Ensure Workers are Protected With Flu Vaccine

1. Flu and COVID-19 symptoms often look alike: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm>
2. Make it easy for workers in your facility to get flu vaccine: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/healthcareworkers.htm>
3. Ensure patients are protected with flu vaccine.
 - a. Make a strong recommendation: https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/healthcare/flu-vaccine-rec-65_2020.pdf
 - b. Address resident concerns: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/seniors/seniors-vaccination-factsheet-final.pdf>
4. Create a culture that promotes flu vaccination:
 - a. Share Don't Wait Vaccinate Flu Campaign: <https://www.immunizeca.org/flu-season/>
 - b. Provide stickers for employee badges: <https://www.avery.com/blank/labels/94506>
 - c. Post resources at your facility: <https://eziz.org/resources/flu-promo-materials/>
 - If You Work in a Healthcare Setting: <https://eziz.org/assets/docs/IMM-801.pdf> (English);
 - <https://eziz.org/assets/docs/IMM-801S.pdf> (Spanish)
 - I Won't Spread Flu flyer: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/healthcare/wont-spread-flu-11x8.5-custom.pdf>
5. Stay informed of the latest influenza guidelines:
 - a. Frequently Asked Questions: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/season/faq-flu-season-2020-2021.htm>
 - b. Healthcare-Associated Infections Program: https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CHCQ/HAI/Pages/SNF_DetectAndControlOutbreaks.aspx
 - c. Prevention Strategies for Seasonal Influenza in Healthcare Settings: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/healthcaresettings.htm>