

George Latimer
County Executive

Sherlita Amler, M.D.
Commissioner of Health

December 2020

Dear Physician, Medical Director and Office Manager:

National Influenza Vaccination Week (Dec. 6-12) is here and we are in the midst of both a pandemic and flu season, so it is especially important that your patients get a flu vaccine this year. A strong recommendation from you can make the difference in whether or not your patients are vaccinated.

Please let your patients know that flu vaccines can be life-saving and they are safe, effective and widely available. Tell them that a flu shot will help them protect themselves and their most vulnerable family and friends well into 2021.

Remind your patients that the vaccine can help them avoid flu and Covid-19 overlap and help you determine how best to treat them if they do become sick. Those who get a flu shot and then get the flu will have milder symptoms and are less likely to require hospitalization. As you know, this is so important with the Covid-19 pandemic still posing a strain on our healthcare systems.

Your patients should know that anyone with respiratory infection symptoms should be tested for Covid-19 and influenza and avoid exposing others until they receive their test results

If you do not offer flu vaccines in your practice, please refer patients to local pharmacies and supermarkets where they can get their flu shots, often with no appointment. They also may check our website for more information at www.westchestergov.com/health. Please impress upon patients that sooner is better, since the vaccine takes about two weeks to be fully effective.

Remind patients that:

- One shot can protect them from the common flu strains that are circulating this year.
- The vaccine is safe, effective and provides immunity for the entire flu season, which typically runs from October to May.
- The shot is not a live virus vaccine, so they cannot get the flu from the shot.
- There are few side effects – the most common is temporary soreness or redness at the injection site.
- The nasal spray vaccine is live but is so weakened that it cannot cause influenza.

Who should be vaccinated?

- Almost everyone age 6 months or older
- Anyone age 50 and over

- Anyone with a chronic medical condition
- Anyone who takes care of an infant 6 months of age or younger
- Anyone who is pregnant
- Anyone who wants to avoid getting the flu and spreading it to others

- People who are at high risk of serious complications from influenza. See [People at High Risk of Developing Flu-Related Complications](#) for a full list of age and health factors that confer increased risk. They include children younger than five, adults age 65 and older, pregnant women, residents of nursing homes, people with extreme obesity, and those with certain medical conditions.

Please share the attached flu handout with your patients. Consider adding a flu shot reminder to your office's on-hold message and to your website. Thank you for your cooperation.

Free flyers and brochures are available to download and print at:
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/resource-center/freeresources/index.htm>
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/resource-center/nivw/materials.htm>

Sincerely,



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