

Influenza (Flu) Vaccination in the Pharmacy: What You Need to Know!

Pharmacists play a critical role in protecting patients against flu and flu-related complications by advocating for and administering flu vaccines to patients 3 and older in accordance with CDC's recommendations. While clinical practices have limited hours and typically require appointments, pharmacies often have longer hours, and many do not require appointments, offering another avenue for patients to get their annual flu vaccines.

Talking Points: How to Give a Strong Recommendation

REMEMBER: healthcare professionals are considered the most trusted sources of information when it comes to vaccines.

Use strong, assumptive flu vaccine recommendations and make sure to **SHARE**:

- Share the tailored reason why the recommended vaccine is right for the patient given their age, health status, lifestyle, occupation, or other risk factors.
- Highlight (with permission) positive experiences with vaccines (personal or in your practice), as appropriate, to reinforce the benefits and strengthen confidence in vaccination.
- Address patient questions with empathy. Use open questions to explore a patient's concerns about the vaccine. When responding to concerns, use plain and understandable language.
- Remind patients that vaccines protect them and their loved ones from many common and serious diseases.
- Explain the potential costs of getting the disease, including serious health effects, time lost (such as missing work or family obligations), and financial costs.



Addressing Vaccine Refusal

Be compassionate and empathetic. Ask if you can readdress vaccination again the future. If the patient is receptive, ask permission and share an informational handout on their specific concerns.

For more information,
please visit the CDC
website at:



SCAN HERE!

Addressing Common Concerns

Vaccination isn't important/the flu isn't that serious: Share the benefits of flu vaccination. Reset expectations – receiving your annual flu vaccine helps reduce severe outcomes like hospitalization and death. May help reduce the number of days missed from [school, work, daycare] and keep you doing the activities you love to do [e.g. sporting events, social gatherings].

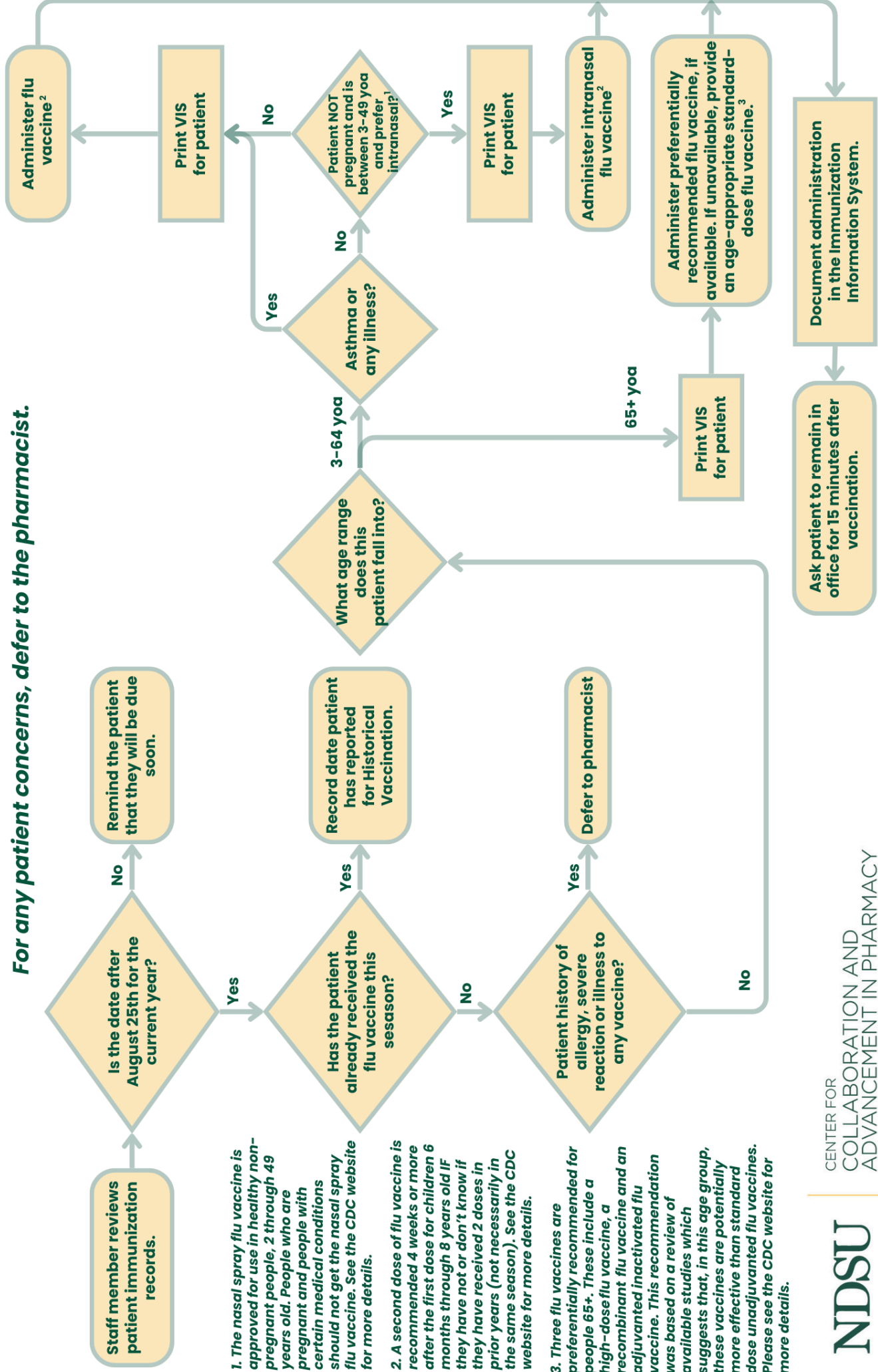
I never get the flu: Discuss the prevalence of flu – CDC estimates that during the typical flu season, the virus leads to 9-45 million illnesses, 140,000-810,000 hospitalizations and between 12,000-61,000 deaths annually since 2010.

Flu vaccine causes illness or side effects: Discuss how flu vaccine does not cause flu and some of the reasons why a patient may become ill following vaccination: not enough time to develop immunity, already exposed to flu/flu-like illness, vaccine doesn't cover strain circulating, age, exc.

Do I need a flu vaccine every year? CDC recommends a flu vaccine for everyone 6 months and older every year for two reasons: First, a person's protection from vaccination declines over time and an annual flu vaccine is needed to provide optimal protection. Second, because flu viruses are constantly changing, our flu vaccines are reviewed each year and sometimes updated to keep up with changing flu viruses.

Flu Vaccination Workflow

For any patient concerns, defer to the pharmacist.



1. The nasal spray flu vaccine is approved for use in healthy non-pregnant people, 2 through 49 years old. People who are pregnant and people with certain medical conditions should not get the nasal spray flu vaccine. See the CDC website for more details.

2. A second dose of flu vaccine is recommended 4 weeks or more after the first dose for children 6 months through 8 years old IF they have not or don't know if they have received 2 doses in prior years (not necessarily in the same season). See the CDC website for more details.

3. Three flu vaccines are preferentially recommended for people 65+. These include a high-dose flu vaccine, a recombinant flu vaccine and an adjuvanted inactivated flu vaccine. This recommendation was based on a review of available studies which suggests that, in this age group, these vaccines are potentially more effective than standard dose unadjuvanted flu vaccines. Please see the CDC website for more details.