***Get My Flu Shot* Campaign Talking Points**

***Last updated 9/15/2023***

**TOPLINE MESSAGE**

The Ad Council, AMA, and CDC are launching our annual ***Get My Flu Shot*** campaign to motivate more people to get vaccinated against seasonal flu. Getting an annual flu shot is the best way to reduce your risk from flu and its potentially serious complications. Experts encourage people to get flu vaccinations during September and October ideally in order to be protected when flu season begins.

**CDC estimates last flu season there were at least 27 million flu illnesses, 12 million flu medical visits, 300,000 flu hospitalizations, and 19,000 deaths related to flu.** While being vaccinated reduced the risk of hospitalization due to the flu by about 50%, fewer than half of the country got a flu vaccine. Health experts strongly encourage Americans to get vaccinated before this flu season begins to reduce your risk from flu and potentially serious complications. With concerns of co-circulating viruses like respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) this season, Americans should get up to date on their other recommended vaccines as well.

Go to [**GetMyFluShot.org**](https://getmyflushot.org/) for more information, including where to **get a flu vaccine in your area**.

**Key Messages**

**CDC:**

* **[why]** Getting a flu shot is something we all can do to help slow the spread of flu and keep ourselves, our families, and communities protected from flu.
	+ **On average, in the U.S., flu results in millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations, and tens of thousands of deaths.**
	+ Currently seasonal flu activity is low across most of the United States. CDC expects flu activity to increase in the coming weeks.
	+ Last year’s flu hospitalizations were the highest they have been in at least a decade.
	+ CDC anticipates flu viruses, RSV, and the virus that causes COVID-19 to spread during the upcoming fall and winter.
	+ **Flu shots remain the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones against flu and its potentially serious complications, including hospitalization and death.**
* **[when]** Flu season often begins in October and can run as late as May, but most commonly peaks in February. The *Get My Flu Shot* campaign urges Americans to get a flu shot now and get protected ahead of the start of flu season.
	+ **CDC recommends vaccination by the end of October, ideally, so now is a good time to get a flu shot. It’s best for people to get vaccinated before there is flu activity in their local area.**
	+ CDC continues to recommend vaccination of those not yet vaccinated, as long as the threat of flu remains. Flu seasons vary in timing. While flu most often peaks in February, significant flu activity can start as early as October and last into May.
	+ Getting vaccinated is particularly important for those people who are at higher risk of developing serious flu complications, including young children and people from certain racial and ethnic minority groups who are more likely to get very sick from flu and less likely to be vaccinated.
* **[who] CDC encourages everyone six months and older to get a flu shot. Some communities, including Black and Hispanic, Adults 65+ and children are at higher risk for flu.**
	+ **Racial & Ethnic Minorities:** Black, Hispanic, American Indian, and Alaska Native Americans are at higher risk for being hospitalized with flu, due to longstanding health inequities.
		- Some racial and ethnic minority groups are more likely to face multiple barriers to accessing health care, including lack of insurance, transportation, or ability to take time off from work.
		- Social determinants of health are the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes.
			* Social determinants of health are linked to a lack of opportunity and resources to protect, improve, and maintain health.
				+ Taken together, these factors create health inequities— types of health disparities that stem from systems, policies, and practices shaping the distribution and access to the opportunities needed to live the healthiest life possible.
		- Because people from some racial and ethnic minority groups are at increased risk of developing serious flu illness resulting in hospitalization, it's especially important for people in these communities to get vaccinated.
	+ **Adults 65+:** It’s particularly important for people 65 years and older to get a flu shot as people in this age group are at higher risk of getting seriously ill from flu.
		- For this flu season**,** CDC recommends three preferential flu vaccines for adults 65 years and older in the United States:
			* Higher dose flu vaccines (Fluzone High-Dose Quadrivalent vaccine and Flublok Quadrivalent recombinant flu vaccine) or adjuvanted flu vaccine (Fluad Quadrivalent adjuvanted flu vaccine) over standard-dose unadjuvanted flu vaccines.
		- CDC studies show that these vaccines are potentially more effective than standard dose unadjuvanted flu vaccines for older Americans.
	+ **Children:** Vaccination is also very important for people who are at higher risk of serious flu complications, including children 6 months-5 years old.
		- Flu illness is more dangerous than the common cold for children.
		- Last flu season, CDC reported 172 flu-related pediatric deaths, and 80% of those children were not fully vaccinated against flu.
		- Flu can be serious for children, and a flu vaccine is the best way to protect your kids from flu.
	+ **You can always speak to your doctor or healthcare provider if you have any additional questions about getting vaccinated against flu.**

**AMA:**

* **[why]** Getting vaccinated can help **keep you out of the hospital** and **lessen the burden on** the healthcare workforce this holiday season.
	+ Last year, early hospitalization rates for flu were among the highest we’ve seen at that time in more than a decade.
	+ Adults 65 years and older have the highest hospitalization rate, but the second highest group is children younger than 5 years (and people in other age groups can end up in the hospital too).
	+ Getting a flu shot can also help **prevent people from missing work and incurring additional medical costs.**
* **[what]** The ***Get My Flu Shot* campaign** urges people across the U.S. to get their annual flu shot this flu season– to protect themselves, their loved ones, and their communities.
	+ PSAs include **“No Time for Flu”** and **#FluFacts** to highlight the importance of getting vaccinated against the flu to protect yourself and your loved ones during flu season.
	+ Our campaign will also offer FAQ videos featuring medical professionals and other trusted messengers to help address questions and concerns about the flu shot and provide fact-based messaging and resources.
	+ Go to [**GetMyFluShot.org**](https://getmyflushot.org/) for more information, including where to **get a flu vaccine in your area**.
* **[how]** The PSAs will run nationwide in English and Spanish across all platforms, in time and space donated by media, throughout this flu season. The campaign is focused on reaching people who have not yet decided to get a flu shot this year, prioritizing Black and Hispanic audiences.
	+ Due to longstanding health inequities, such as lack of access to health care, that create undue burden and barriers, Black and Hispanic people are at higher risk of severe illness from flu and are also less likely to get flu vaccinations.4
* **[CTA]** Get a flu shot for yourself, and for those around you. Learn more at [**GetMyFluShot.org**](https://getmyflushot.org/)**,** including where to **get a flu vaccine in your area**.



**Additional Key Flu Facts for the Campaign**

**CDC:**

* **[WHAT IS THE EFFICACY OF THIS YEAR’S FLU SHOTS IN PREVENTING FLU?]**
	+ The effectiveness of flu shots varies, but generally, vaccines are between 40-60% effective when the vaccine viruses are the same as circulating viruses. Flu shots offer protection against the flu and limit flu severity among vaccine recipients who still get sick.
* **[HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF AGAINST RSV AND OTHER RESPIRATORY DISEASES?]**
	+ Last fall and winter, the United States experienced a rise in multiple respiratory viruses, especially flu, RSV, and the virus that causes COVID-19. CDC expects these three viruses will spread again this season,so it’s important to get your recommended immunizations to reduce the risk of getting sick with these respiratory viruses. Make sure you’re up to date on your COVID-19, flu and RSV vaccines. It’s also important to practice preventive measures, such as avoiding people who are sick, staying home when you are sick, covering your coughs and sneezes, and washing your hands frequently, to protect against respiratory disease. Flu, COVID-19, and other respiratory illnesses have similar symptoms, and there are treatment options that work better when started early – so it’s recommended to seek care early for individuals who are at increased risk of severe illness.
* **[ISN’T THIS LATE IN THE FLU SEASON TO LAUNCH THIS CAMPAIGN?]**
	+ The flu season has not started yet. Flu activity in the U.S. is low at this time.
	+ Flu seasons vary in timing. While flu most often peaks in February, significant flu activity can occur as early as October and last into May.
	+ This campaign complements other outreach and education efforts that are underway by CDC, AMA, employers, and health care professionals.
	+ CDC tracks flu activity weekly in FluView. The first full FluView of the 2023-2024 season will be released on Friday, October 13, 2023.
	+ Influenza A(H1N1) and influenza B viruses are being detected more frequently than influenza A(H3N2) viruses.
* **[CAN I GET A FLU SHOT AND THE COVID-19 VACCINE AT THE SAME TIME?]**
	+ Yes, you can get a flu shot at the same time as getting a COVID-19 vaccine if you are eligible and the recommended timing coincides.5
	+ CDC and AMA recommend flu vaccination to protect against influenza viruses and COVID-19 vaccination to protect against SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.
	+ A flu shot helps protect you, your family, and your community from flu viruses, which can have serious complications.
	+ COVID-19 vaccination helps protect you, your family, and your community from COVID-19, which can have serious complications.
	+ Vaccination remains the best protection against COVID-19-related hospitalization and death.
	+ Vaccination also reduces your chance of suffering the effects of Long COVID, which can develop during or following acute infection and last for an extended duration.
	+ If you have not received a COVID-19 vaccine in the past 2 months, get an updated COVID-19 vaccine to protect yourself this fall and winter.
* **[IS IT POSSIBLE TO GET FLU AND COVID-19 AT THE SAME TIME?]**
	+ It is relatively rare, but possible to be sick with flu and COVID-19 at the same time, so it’s especially important for people who are at higher risk of serious complications—and their caregivers—to get their flu shot.
		- This includes people with underlying medical conditions like lung disease, heart disease, neurologic disorders, weakened immune systems, and diabetes.
* **[WHO SHOULD GET A FLU SHOT AND WHEN?]**
	+ CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older (with rare exceptions) get a flu vaccine every flu season. CDC continues to recommend flu vaccination for as long as flu viruses may circulate.
* **[WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A FLU SHOT?]**
	+ Flu shots are a safe and important way to protect yourself and your community from influenza.
	+ Flu shot protects against the four flu viruses that CDC expects to circulate this flu season.
	+ If you get a flu shot, you are less likely to get flu and less likely to need to go to a doctor’s office, urgent care, or emergency room for flu.
	+ You are also less likely to be hospitalized or die from flu.
* **[WHAT KIND OF FLU SHOT IS BEST?]**
	+ There are many options for flu vaccines, including a nasal spray vaccine. For the 2023-2024 flu season, there are three flu vaccines that are preferentially recommended for people 65 years and older. These are [Fluzone High-Dose Quadrivalent vaccine](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/qa_fluzone.htm%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), [Flublok Quadrivalent recombinant flu vaccine](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/qa_flublok-vaccine.htm%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) and [Fluad Quadrivalent adjuvanted flu vaccine](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/adjuvant.htm%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank). 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. There is no preferential recommendation for people younger than 65 years.6 **Ask your doctor or healthcare provider which vaccine is best for you.**
* **[HOW BAD WAS LAST YEAR’S FLU SEASON?]**
	+ CDC estimates last flu season there were at least 27 million flu illnesses, 12 million flu medical visits, 300,000 flu hospitalizations, and 19,000 deaths related to flu.
* **[IN THE EVENT OF A GOVERNMENT SHUT DOWN, WILL THE AVAILABILITY OF FLU SHOTS BE AFFECTED?]**
	+ Based on previous shutdowns we don’t think vaccine availability should be affected and that critical field activities wouldn’t stop.

**AMA:**

* **[WHY PARTNER TOGETHER?]**
	+ The Ad Council, CDC, and AMA have a rich history of working together on public health campaigns, bringing together CDC’s and AMA’s expertise and the Ad Council’s ability to leverage the resources of the advertising and media industry to drive behavior change on a national scale.
* **[WHY THESE AUDIENCES?]**
	+ *Get My Flu Shot* Campaign was developed to reach people who have not yet decided to get their flu shot this year, including ethnic and racial minorities such as Black and Hispanic adults who have not yet been vaccinated.
		- Longstanding healthcare inequities have created undue burden and barriers on Black and Hispanic people and communities, putting these populations at a higher risk of severe illness from flu.
		- Compared to White adults, flu hospitalization rates are:
			* Nearly 80% higher among Black adults
			* 30% higher among American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) adults
			* 20% higher among Hispanic adults