

# Communication 101

## How to Respond to Questions About Flu & Flu Vaccination

In your advocacy work as a **Flu Champion**, you may encounter some difficult questions. Prepare yourself for these conversations with various talking points about flu and flu vaccination.



### What are the real risks to myself and my family if we do get the flu?

Flu can be a potentially serious disease, resulting in missed days of work or school, hospitalization, and even death.

### Why do I need to get a flu vaccine every year?

There are many different strains (types of flu) that can make people sick, and these can change from year to year as flu viruses evolve. In order to keep up with this change in circulating flu strains, flu vaccines are updated annually.

### Why should I care about the flu?

Anyone can be affected by flu no matter their age, health status, gender, or lifestyle. Flu can quickly cause illness and, in some cases, life-threatening complications.

### How can I protect myself and my family from the flu?

The best defense is annual flu vaccination for everyone six months and older! Annual flu vaccination is the best preventative measure to help prevent flu-related illness, hospitalization, and even death. Practicing healthy habits is a must, too, but is not a replacement for annual flu vaccination.

### Can the flu vaccine cause the flu?

Absolutely not! The flu vaccine contains a dead (inactivated) or weakened (attenuated) form of the flu virus, or sometimes even no flu virus at all, so it's impossible for it to give you the flu.

### When should I get myself and my family vaccinated?

It takes approximately two weeks following vaccination for your body to build up protection against the flu, so it's ideal to get vaccinated before flu starts spreading in your community (e.g., end of October). However, later is better than never, so flu vaccination later in the season may also be a consideration! It's best to talk to your trusted healthcare professional to determine the ideal time for you and your family members to get vaccinated.

### How effective are flu vaccines?

Flu vaccines have benefits beyond only helping to prevent illness, they can also help prevent serious flu-related complications and severe outcomes like hospitalization and even death. Since the flu virus is contagious, the more people who get vaccinated, the less likely it is that the flu will spread within a community (a concept called *community immunity*).



I believe the words 'just' and 'flu' shouldn't be in the same sentence, unless it's to say, 'I just got my flu vaccine.'

- Patsy Stinchfield  
MS, CPNP, CIC



**Remember: It's Not 'Just' the Flu - It's a Serious Disease!**

For more information, visit [www.familiesfightingflu.org](http://www.familiesfightingflu.org)