



Dear TVFC program providers,

We are writing to introduce our new “Strategies to Increase Childhood Influenza Vaccination Packet”, to help increase influenza vaccination rates in your facilities. This comprehensive packet contains several resources to streamline and enhance your communication strategies regarding the influenza vaccine. The packet includes:

1. **Influenza email template for schools:** A template for local schools to encourage their participation in vaccination efforts.
2. **School memo for parents:** Designed to work in tandem with the school email template, this communication tool will convey the importance of influenza vaccine to parents.
3. **Pediatric influenza brochure and postcard:** These can be used to provide information about influenza and the importance of vaccination.
4. **Automated hold line scripts:**
These scripts can be implemented in your automated telephone systems to inform callers about influenza vaccination and its benefits.
5. **Addressing influenza vaccine myths handout:** This handout lists common myths surrounding the influenza vaccine and counters them with evidence-based facts.
6. **Social media toolkit and guide:**
Ready-to-post content for various social media platforms.
A link for the toolkit is located on the provider guide.

By utilizing these resources, we hope to significantly increase influenza vaccination rates across Texas, contributing to the health and wellbeing of the community. Should you require any further clarification or guidance in using these resources, please do not hesitate to reach out to the DSHS influenza team.

Contact Information:

Email: InfluenzaImmProgram@dshs.texas.gov

Influenza program website: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunizations/what-we-do/vaccines/flu>

Thank you for your efforts in promoting influenza vaccination.

Best regards,

Texas Department of State Health Services
Immunization Section

EMAIL TEMPLATE

Description

This email template and memo are designed to help medical providers establish a relationship with schools and promote influenza vaccination among students and their families. Providers can use this email template to introduce themselves to schools and provide a memo that the schools can then send to parents.

The memo is intended to be distributed by the schools to parents via email, school website, or other communication methods that works best for the school. It provides information about the importance of influenza vaccination and encourages parents to get their child vaccinated.

Feel free to customize the email template to fit your specific needs and communication style. You should include all relevant information, such as any contact information and any special accommodation you can provide for schools and students. Communication should be sent to schools at the beginning of the school year, preferably in mid-August.

Email Subject Line

Your School Can Help Keep Our Communities Safe from the Flu

Content

Dear [School Contact],

Troubling data has emerged from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicating that there has been a drop nationally in flu vaccine uptake this flu season and an increase in flu activity. As a healthcare provider, I am committed to ensuring the health and well-being of our community. With the upcoming flu season, I believe that it is important for healthcare providers and schools to work together to promote influenza vaccination among students and their families. Schools can help slow the spread of respiratory illnesses, including flu, by teaching students, parents, and staff that the single best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated each flu season.

To assist you in your preparations for flu season, I have attached a memo from the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) addressing the life-saving benefits of flu vaccination this season. According to CDC, about 80 percent of reported flu deaths in children occur in children who have not been fully vaccinated. A flu vaccine can be lifesaving for children and is the best defense against the flu.

By working together, we can keep our families and communities safe from vaccine-preventable diseases by promoting the importance of flu vaccination each season within our schools.

Please take care and follow all CDC and DSHS guidelines to help protect our communities from the spread of flu.

Thank you,
[Your Name/Organization]

Resources:

CDC Flu Toolkit: [CDC Digital Media Toolkit: 2022-2023 Flu Season](#) | [CDC](#)



Texas Department of State
Health Services

dshs.texas.gov

Immunization Section | Rev. 05/2023



Re: A Message to Parents from The Texas Department of State Health Services

Dear Parents,

Troubling data has emerged from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicating that there has been a drop nationally in flu vaccine uptake this flu season and an increase in flu activity. The rates of children hospitalized for flu are among the highest seen in nearly a decade. We would like to remind you of the importance of flu vaccination in reducing the spread of the flu in our schools, for the safety and wellbeing of children, staff, and families.

The CDC recommends everyone six months and older to get a flu vaccine every year. The flu vaccine has been shown to prevent millions of flu illnesses, tens of thousands of hospitalizations, and thousands of deaths each year. For children, the flu is more dangerous than the common cold. Encouraging flu vaccination this season is the most important action a parent can take to prevent the spread of the flu and the potentially serious complications that can manifest from it. If you or anyone you know needs assistance locating a flu vaccine, please use the vaccine finder located on vaccines.gov.

Please take care and follow all CDC and DSHS guidelines to protect yourself, your family and your community from the spread of influenza.

Thank you,

Texas Department of State Health Services
Immunization Section

What can I do if my child gets sick with the flu?

- Seek medical care.
- Stay at home.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Encourage rest and fluids.
- Ask a medical provider about fever-reducing medicines based on your child's age.
- Protect those at high risk of flu complications.

When can my child go back to school after being sick with flu?

- Your child should stay home for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone. The fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen. A fever is defined as 100°F/37.8°C or higher.

What are the benefits of getting a flu vaccine?

- Reduces the risk of getting sick with the flu.
- Reduces the risk of flu-associated hospitalization.
- Reduces the risk of flu-associated death among children.
- Protects those who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness and complications.

**For more
information, visit
ImmunizeTexas.com
or call (800) 252-9152.**



TEXAS
Health and Human
Services

**Texas Department of State
Health Services**

Immunization Section
MC-1946
P.O. Box 149347
Austin, TX 78714-9347

Stock No. 11-xxxxx Revised 05/2023

FAQ Pediatric Influenza



What is influenza (flu)?

Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. Flu is different from a cold and usually comes on suddenly. Flu viruses are constantly changing so flu vaccines are updated yearly to protect against the flu viruses most likely to cause illness during the upcoming flu season (CDC).

How serious is the flu?

While flu illness can vary from mild to severe, children often need medical care because of the flu.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that between 2010 - 2020, between 6,000 and 27,000 children younger than 5 years old have been hospitalized from flu each year in the U.S.

Children younger than 5 years and children of any age with certain long-term health problems are at increased risk of flu complications like pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus and ear infections. Some health problems that can make children more vulnerable to serious illness or complication with flu include asthma, diabetes, and disorders of the brain or nervous system (CDC).

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023, February 8). Vaccine effectiveness: How well do flu vaccines work? Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved March 21, 2023, from [https://www.cdc.gov/flu/vaccines-work/vaccineeffect.htm#:~:text=While%20vaccine%20effectiveness%20\(VE\)%20can,used%20to%20make%20flu%20vaccines.](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/vaccines-work/vaccineeffect.htm#:~:text=While%20vaccine%20effectiveness%20(VE)%20can,used%20to%20make%20flu%20vaccines.)

What are signs and symptoms of flu?

Signs and symptoms of flu can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, feeling feverish/chills, fatigue (tiredness), and sometimes children may also have vomiting and diarrhea. It is important to note that some children who are sick with flu may not have a fever.

How can I protect myself and my child from the flu?

Flu vaccination is recommended for everyone six months and older every year.

- Get a yearly flu vaccine for yourself and your child.
- Consider flu shots and nasal spray flu vaccines which are both options for most children.
- Caregivers of children at higher risk of flu complications should get a flu vaccine. Babies younger than six months are at higher risk for serious flu complications but are too young to get a flu vaccine.
- If you are pregnant, get a flu vaccine to protect yourself and your baby from the flu. Research shows that flu vaccination during pregnancy can protect the baby from the flu for several months after birth (CDC).



Is a flu vaccine safe for my child with chronic health problems?

Yes. Flu vaccines have a good safety record and several of them are approved for use in children 6 months and older, including healthy children and children with certain chronic health conditions. Because children with chronic health conditions are at a high risk of getting flu related complications, it is especially important that they get vaccinated.

Can other indicated vaccines and flu vaccines be co-administered?

Yes, if other vaccine are indicated, they can be administered at the same time as inactivated influenza vaccine. Consult with your provider for more information on co-administration.

**Healthy people get the flu too.
Don't let that be you. Get the flu shot.**



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Health Services

dshs.texas.gov

Immunization Section | Rev. 04/2023

Provider Flu Hold-line Scripts

Public health groups are encouraged to use these one-liner scripts and messaging on their own phone hold-lines and wait-lines and are welcome to personalize any of these scripts with their own local health department/organization and local immunization event/vaccine information.

Below are script categories and examples that represent several audiences you may want to focus vaccinations on. Content included in this template are suggestions. You are encouraged to edit or change the content to speak to your audience as you see fit.

When should you get the flu vaccine?

It's not too late to schedule your flu vaccine! Flu season lasts until May. Let one of our staff members know you're ready to get protected against vaccine-preventable diseases.

Flu season begins in October and will continue until May. Get your flu vaccine today to protect yourself and your community.

We appreciate your patience. Remember, the best time to get your flu vaccine is right before the flu season peaks.

Flu season peaks between December and February. Get a flu vaccine today and enjoy the holiday season!

High risk groups and severe flu complications

Did you know that adults over 65, young children and pregnant women are at higher risk for developing severe flu complications? Get the flu vaccine and protect yourself and loved ones.

The flu vaccine prevents severe symptoms, hospitalization and death. Ask our staff about the flu vaccine and protect yourself today!

The flu vaccine and children

Each year in the United States, between 7,000 and 28,000 children are hospitalized for the flu. The flu vaccine can protect your child from developing severe flu symptoms. Ask our staff about a flu vaccine for your child today!

It is estimated that 130 to 1,200 children die from the flu each year. Protect your child and bring them in for their annual flu vaccine.

General

Don't let flu season get you down. Schedule your flu vaccine today!

Don't wait any longer to receive your flu vaccine. Protect yourself and your family by getting a flu vaccine today.

The flu vaccine is safe and effective for anyone over the age of six months. Don't get caught with the flu, schedule your flu vaccine today!

Reminder: It's important to receive a flu vaccine annually to stay protected. We have flu vaccines available in our clinics today!

Don't let the flu interfere with your family gatherings and vacations. Protect yourself and get the flu vaccine!

Addressing Influenza Vaccine Myths

MYTH: “The flu vaccine causes the flu.”

- No, flu vaccines cannot cause flu illness. Flu vaccines given with a needle are made with either inactivated (killed) viruses, or with only a single protein from the flu virus. The nasal spray vaccine contains live viruses that are weakened and will not cause illness.

MYTH: “I am healthy, I do not need the flu vaccine.”

- Flu vaccines prevent millions of illnesses and flu-related doctor’s visits each year. For example, during the 2019-2020 flu, vaccination prevented an estimated 7.5 million flu illnesses, 3.7 million flu-associated medical visits, 105,000 flu-associated hospitalizations, and 6,300 flu-associated deaths.
- The flu vaccine has been shown to reduce the risk of having to go to the doctor with flu by 40 to 60%.

MYTH: “I have never had the flu, so I do not need to get a vaccine.”

- Getting vaccinated may also protect people around you, including those who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness, like babies, young children, older people and people with certain chronic health conditions.

MYTH: “The flu vaccine increases your risk of getting COVID.”

- There is no evidence that getting a flu vaccine increases your risk of getting sick from a coronavirus, like the one that causes COVID-19.

MYTH: “You can’t get COVID-19 vaccine and flu vaccine at the same time.”

- Yes, you can get a flu and COVID-19 vaccine at the same time. Even though both vaccines can be given at the same visit, the recommended schedule should be followed.

Note: It is possible to have flu and other respiratory illnesses at the same time.

MYTH: “You don’t have to get the flu vaccine every year.”

- The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone six months of age and older with rare exceptions. Protection from vaccination declines over time, annual vaccines are needed to get the best protection against the flu. Additionally, flu viruses are constantly changing, the vaccine composition is reviewed each year and updated as needed based on which influenza viruses are making people sick.

MYTH: “Waiting until winter/late fall for a flu shot is safer.”

- How long you are immune is discussed in the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendations. While delaying getting the flu vaccine until later in the fall may lead to higher levels of immunity during the winter months, this should be balanced against possible risks. These risks include missing the opportunity to receive the flu vaccine and vaccines ‘running out’ from a large number of people getting the vaccine at the same time.

MYTH: “The flu vaccine does not work.”

- There are several reasons why someone might get flu symptoms, even after getting the flu vaccine.
 1. Other respiratory illnesses, people can get other illnesses during flu season, like the common cold, bronchitis or COVID-19. Some of these mimic some flu symptoms. The flu vaccine only protects against the flu, not any other respiratory illnesses.
 2. It is possible that someone was exposed to the flu before getting the vaccine. It takes the body two weeks to develop full immune protection, causing someone to get sick even though they got the vaccine.
 3. There is more than one flu strain. Each year experts attempt to predict the strain most likely to affect the country. The ability of a vaccine to protect is due largely on the similarity between the predicted strain and the most common strain this year. For more information, see <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/viruses/index.htm>.
 4. Everyone is different and the flu vaccine may be more effective for some people than others. Even if you do not get complete immunity several studies have shown that vaccinated people reduce the severity of their illness, even if they still get sick.

MYTH: “I’m pregnant, I can’t get the flu vaccine.”

- Vaccination reduces the risk of flu-associated acute respiratory infection in pregnant people by about half.
- Studies have shown that in addition to helping to protect pregnant women from flu, a flu vaccine given during pregnancy helps protect the baby from flu for up to six months after birth, when he or she is too young to be vaccinated.

Social Media Copy/Messaging Guide

The Social Media Toolkit is designed to assist TVFC program providers in increasing awareness of influenza vaccinations using various social media platforms. This guide will explain how to effectively use this toolkit to reach and engage your target audience.

This guide provides posting guidelines and sample social media copy for use with the campaign images provided. We encourage organizations to integrate their own graphics and imagery along with the post copy on their social media platforms. Feel free to personalize any posts with your organization's logo and adjust the language as needed to cater to your target age group.

Images Note

The flu campaign images are organized by various themes. The images are interchangeable with the post copy provided. Choose a caption that aligns with your selected image, resonates with your community and accurately conveys your intended message.

Post Guidelines

The social media posts are suited for Facebook, Instagram, and X (Twitter). Here are some suggested guidelines for posts.

X (formerly Twitter): A maximum of 280 characters, including spaces, per post. Post from October and into March of the following year. Include multiple hashtags.

Facebook: Limit your posts to four sentences or fewer. If a longer caption is necessary, use paragraph spaces to break up the text. Post from October and into March of the following year.

Instagram: Limit your posts to four sentences or fewer. If a longer caption is necessary, use paragraph spaces to break up the text. Post from October and into March of the following year. Include multiple hashtags.

Hashtags

Consider using **#FightFlu**, **#EveryDoseMatters**, **#DontWaitVaccinate**

Post Copy

Partners and stakeholders are encouraged to modify language as necessary to suit the target audience.

| Post Copy | Suggested Platforms | Theme |
|--|--|---|
| Catch up with your vaccines this flu season. Get your flu vaccine along with other vaccines you might have missed at your next doctor's appointment. #FightFlu #DontWaitVaccinate #EveryDoseMatters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter • Facebook • Instagram | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-Administration |
| The flu is more than a common cold. Each year, thousands of Texans get the flu, which can lead to hospitalization and even death. This is preventable, get vaccinated. #FightFlu | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter • Facebook • Instagram | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Flu Is Serious • Myth Busting |
| It's simple. If more people in Texas got vaccinated against the flu, we'd see fewer cases, fewer hospitalizations, and fewer deaths. Get ahead of the spread. Get your flu vaccine. #FightFlu #DontWaitVaccinate #EveryDoseMatters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter • Facebook • Instagram | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Flu Is Serious |
| Getting sick is no fun. Five minutes spent getting a flu vaccine can save you a week— or longer— of suffering from the flu. Make an appointment with your health care provider to get vaccinated. #FightFlu #DontWaitVaccinate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter • Facebook • Instagram | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting Sick Is Not Fun |
| Love feeling sick? Neither do your friends and family. Get your flu vaccine and protect the ones you love. #FightFlu #DontWaitVaccinate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter • Facebook • Instagram | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting Sick Is Not Fun |
| The flu vaccine is recommended for all pregnant women, and it's safe to get at any point of your pregnancy. Protect you and your baby's health by getting vaccinated for the flu. #FightFlu #DontWaitVaccinate #Protect2FromTheFlu | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter • Facebook • Instagram | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnancy/Infants • Protect The Ones You Love • Myth Busting |
| Did you know it's safe to get the flu vaccine anytime during pregnancy? When you are vaccinated, it protects your baby up to six months after birth. #FightFlu #DontWaitVaccinate #Protect2FromTheFlu | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter • Facebook • Instagram | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnancy/Infants • Protect The Ones You Love • Myth Busting |
| Spread love, not the flu. Get your flu vaccine to protect your friends, community and the ones you love. Schedule an appointment with your doctor or local pharmacy. #FightFlu #EveryDoseMatters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter • Facebook • Instagram | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect The Ones You Love |

| Post Copy | Suggested Platforms | Theme |
|---|--|-----------------------|
| Even healthy adults can get the flu, not just children and the elderly. Make sure you stay protected this flu season by getting vaccinated. #FightFlu #DontWaitVaccinate #EveryDoseMatters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter • Facebook • Instagram | • Myth Busting |
| Prevent what you can. Get your flu vaccine. #FightFlu #DontWaitVaccinate #EveryDoseMatters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook • Instagram | • Myth Busting |
| Everyone should get the flu vaccine, even people who are young and healthy. Healthy people can also spread the virus to others. Prevent what you can, get your flu vaccine. #FightFlu | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter | • Myth Busting |
| No, flu vaccines cannot give you the flu. The viruses in the flu vaccine are dead, which means they cannot cause infection. If you get sick after receiving the flu vaccine, it's most likely because you were infected beforehand, or the vaccine's protection hadn't kicked in yet. It takes two weeks after receiving the flu vaccine for your body to fully build its immune response. #FightFlu #DontWaitVaccinate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook • Instagram | • Myth Busting |
| No, flu vaccines cannot give you the flu. The viruses in the flu vaccine are dead, which means they cannot cause infection. #FightFlu #DontWaitVaccinate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter | • Myth Busting |
| The flu vaccine is your best vaccine for avoiding severe sickness from the flu. Not only will the flu vaccine decrease the likelihood of getting the flu, but it also significantly reduces the severity of symptoms. #FightFlu #DontWaitVaccinate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter • Facebook • Instagram | • Myth Busting |
| It's important to get the flu vaccine every year. That's because flu viruses change. The vaccine formulation is updated yearly to protect you against the dominant strain circulating that flu season. Stay protected and get your flu vaccine. #FightFlu #DontWaitVaccinate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter • Facebook • Instagram | • Myth Busting |
| Friendly reminder to get your flu vaccine. The best protection from the flu is getting an annual flu vaccine. The CDC recommends that everyone six months old and older get a flu vaccine. #FightFlu #DontWaitVaccinate #EveryDoseMatters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter • Facebook • Instagram | • Myth Busting |

| Post Copy | Suggested Platforms | Theme |
|--|--|----------------------------------|
| The best time to get a flu vaccine is anytime between September and October. Missed that window? It's not too late. You should still get vaccinated because flu season lasts through May. #FightFlu #DontWaitVaccinate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter • Facebook • Instagram | • Myth Busting |
| Don't let the flu break your soul – Beyonce said so! Getting the flu kills the vibe. Make sure you're vaccinated and protected this year. #FightFlu #DontWaitVaccinate #EveryDoseMatters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter • Facebook • Instagram | • Getting Sick Is Not Fun |