

Scripting Guidance for Flu Shot Hesitant Patients

Introduce all preventive care services including vaccinations and screenings with a strong and direct statement instead of a question.

YES: “You are due for a flu shot today. A nurse will be right in to administer one.”

NO: “Looks like you are due for a flu shot. Would you like to take care of that today?”

Patient: I don’t need a flu shot. I’m healthy and take care of myself.

Even healthy people can get sick enough from the flu to miss work or even be hospitalized.

Even if you bounce back quickly, others around you might not be so lucky. Some people can be infected with the flu virus, but have no symptoms.

You could also spread the flu to others at risk, including young children or older adults.

Patient: Flu season is already over. It’s too late to bother with the flu shot.

Late winter is actually the peak of flu season.

It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body and provide protection against the flu. The sooner you get vaccinated, the more likely it is that you will be protected once flu begins to circulate in your community.

Right now is a key time to get the flu shot.

Patient: Every time I’ve gotten the flu shot, I’ve gotten sick.

The flu shot can cause some mild side effects, but you can’t “catch” the flu from the vaccine.

You may experience soreness, redness and/or swelling from the shot, headache, fever, muscle aches and nausea. These side effects are NOT the flu and shouldn’t last more than a day or two.

Minor side effects are much better than suffering through a full round of flu symptoms.

Patient: I don’t do shots.

The little discomfort you experience will be worth avoiding the flu.

A flu vaccine reduces your risk of illness, hospitalization and can prevent you from spreading the virus.

The minor pain of a flu shot is nothing compared to suffering through days of flu symptoms.