

August 2024

Federal Employee Program The Importance of Influenza Vaccinations

As flu season approaches, emphasizing the critical role influenza vaccination plays in protecting our members' health is essential. Many of your Florida Blue Federal Employee Program® (FEP) members ages 19 years and older will be receiving a letter and/or email this month discussing the importance of getting vaccinated.

Why is the flu vaccine important?

Influenza, commonly known as the flu, is a contagious respiratory illness that can cause mild to severe illness, and even death. During the 2022-2023 flu season, the CDC estimates flu vaccines prevented approximately 6 million flu-related illnesses, 2.9 million health care visits, 65,000 hospitalizations, and 3,700 deaths in the United States.



Additional Benefits of Influenza Vaccination

- Decreases the risk of flu-related complications, such as pneumonia and bronchitis.
- Prevents lost productivity and missed school/workdays.
- Mitigates the spread of influenza in the community, particularly among high-risk populations.



You Play an Important Role. Thank you for the care you give to your patients, our members, and for following these best practices to protect our community:

- Educate patients on the importance of flu vaccination and the risks associated with influenza.
- Offer flu vaccination in your office or tell your patients where they can receive the vaccine.
- Use electronic health records to track patient vaccination status and send reminders.
- Emphasize the importance of vaccination for high-risk populations:
 - Older Adults (65 and older)
 - Pregnant women
 - People with certain chronic health conditions (e.g., heart disease, diabetes, lung disease)
 - People with weakened immune systems.

If members have health questions, they may call the FEP Nurse Line at 1-888-258-3432. Members can also download the Teladoc Health^{®1} app or visit FEPBlue.org/telehealth. If your patients have questions about their plan benefits or claims, they may call Customer Service at 1-800-333-2227.

For more information about influenza vaccinations, visit the CDC website at cdc.gov/flu and navigate to the Health Professionals section for additional resources.

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