Flu Immunization SHARED Decision-Making Guide

In shared decision-making, healthcare professionals and patients work together to make the best possible healthcare decisions. These decisions consider the patient's values, questions, and preferences, factual information about options, and the clinician's knowledge and experience.

STEPS OF SHARED DECISION-MAKING	SAMPLE TALKING POINTS
S Seek Your Patient's Participation	1 Why do I need a flu vaccine?
	2 Flu vaccination can lower your chance of getting sick with flu and of having serious problems from it. We can discuss the options and choose the vaccine that is best for you. What have you heard about flu vaccines?
	3 I've heard the flu can affect your heart. Is that true?
H Help Your Patient Explore and Compare Options	4 If you have heart disease or have had a stroke, the flu can be more serious for you. The flu may also raise your risk of a heart attack.
A Assess Your Patient's Values and Preferences	5 Does it matter whether I get a regular or high-dose vaccine?
	6 If you are 65 years or older, the CDC recommends a high-dose, recombinant, or adjuvanted flu vaccine. These vaccines may offer better protection than a standard flu vaccine.
	7 Can I get the flu from the vaccine?
	8 Flu vaccines cannot cause the flu. Some people have mild side effects, such as a sore arm, headache, muscle aches, or low-grade fever. They usually go away quickly.
R Reach a Decision With Your Patient	9 Can I get my flu vaccine with other vaccines?
	10 Flu vaccines can be given at the same time as other vaccines. What other vaccines are you thinking about?
E Evaluate Your Patient's Decision	11 What else should I know?
	12 The flu vaccine takes about two weeks to work. I recommend that you get vaccinated as soon as possible, but the timing is up to you. Are there any other questions I can answer?
D Decide Which Resources Can Support Your Patient	

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S

Step 1: Seek Your Patient's Participation

Many patients are not aware that they can and should participate in their healthcare decision-making. Communicate that they have choices and invite them to participate in the process.

Summarize the health problem.

- "A study found that the risk of heart attack was six times higher during the week after a confirmed flu infection.
- "People 65 years and older are at higher risk of additional problems from flu like worsening of chronic conditions."

Invite your patient to be involved in decisions.

- "I'd like to talk with you about options for flu immunization. We can decide together which vaccine may be best for you."

H

Step 2: Help Your Patient Explore and Compare Options

Discussing options with your patient can help you build a trusting relationship.

Assess what your patient already knows about their options.

- "What are your thoughts about getting immunized for the flu?" or "Tell me what you know about the flu vaccine."

Explain each option clearly, using plain language. Avoid using technical or medical jargon. Point out when there are clear differences between specific options.

- "Flu vaccination is recommended every year for everyone 6 months and older. Flu vaccines have a long, established safety record, including in people with heart disease and other health problems. Different flu vaccines are approved for different ages, so we can choose the one that's right for you."
- "For people with heart disease, getting a flu vaccine may lower the risk of serious heart-related events, especially in people who recently had a heart attack or other cardiac event."
- "The flu shots for older adults are either stronger or have an ingredient that strengthens the protection compared to the regular flu shot. This helps them work better in people 65 years and older."

Additional information is available at heart.org/en/health-topics/flu-prevention.

Communicate that there are choices and options. Discuss the benefits, risks, and expected outcomes of each vaccine, taking into account risk factors, offering recommendations and guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or other reputable sources.

- "There are different flu vaccines available. Let's discuss which one is best for you."

Additional resources:

Vaccine Information Statements (VIS), immunize.org/vaccines/vis/about-vis/

Influenza Vaccine Recommendations, cdc.gov/flu/hcp/vax-summary/acip-recommendations.html

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A

Step 3: Assess Your Patient's Values and Preferences

Encourage your patient to talk about what is important to them regarding the options.
Use open-ended questions and listen actively to your patient.

- "How will getting the flu vaccine help you?"
- "Which of the options seems to fit best with your health goals?"
- "Do you have any concerns about getting the flu shot?" or "Is there anything holding you back from getting the flu shot today?"

Hear and acknowledge the values and preferences that matter to your patient.
Paraphrase what you have heard. This assures your patient that you are listening to their perspective.

R

Step 4: Reach a Decision with Your Patient

Ask if they are ready to make a decision or if they have any additional questions.
Schedule another session if your patient requests more time to consider the options.

- "Now that we have talked about your flu vaccine options, would you like to receive the vaccine today?" or "Do you have any more questions about flu immunization?"
- "I recommend that you get vaccinated as soon as possible, but the timing is up to you."
- "Would you like to schedule an appointment to come back for the vaccine another time?"

E

Step 5: Evaluate Your Patient's Decision

Make plans to review the decision in the future. Remind your patient that decisions may be reviewed in the future, and they may choose to get vaccinated when they are ready.

- "While you are thinking it over, it's important to know that the flu vaccine takes about two weeks to work."
- "Mild symptoms after getting the vaccine can happen and usually go away quickly. We can talk about ways to help manage them. If you have any serious problems, contact me or another healthcare provider right away."

D

Decide Which Local Resources Can Support Your Patient

Share resources to support patients, including their cardiovascular care team (e.g., physician, pharmacist, nurse, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, and dietitian). Give contact information for each resource.

References

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SHARED Decision-Making Guide: Flu Vaccine Considerations

Patient and provider complete this guide together with a copy provided to the patient.

Vaccine received: _____

Visit date: _____

Patient risks:

- ☐ **Adults 65 or older with or without chronic conditions**
- ☐ **Adults younger than 65 with chronic conditions** such as heart disease (e.g., coronary artery disease, heart failure, irregular heartbeat, or heart valve disorders) or a history of stroke
- ☐ **Adults younger than 65 with no chronic conditions**

Notes

STOP. Provider and patient to discuss benefits, risks, and considerations

Adults younger than 65 with no chronic conditions

The CDC recommends use of any licensed, age-appropriate flu vaccine during flu season. There are multiple flu vaccine manufacturers and vaccines that are licensed and recommended for use in the United States.

Discuss benefits, risks, and considerations of:

- Standard unadjuvanted flu vaccine
- Cell-based flu vaccine
- Recombinant flu vaccine Live
- Attenuated flu vaccine (ages 2-49 only; not for everyone)

https://www.cdc.gov/flu/hcp/vax-summary/seasonal-influenza-vaccines.html

Adults younger than 65 with chronic conditions

There are many flu vaccines approved for people that have a long, established safety record in people with heart disease. The CDC recommends that people with some chronic medical conditions **NOT** get the nasal spray vaccine, called Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine (LAIV).

Discuss benefits, risks, and considerations of:

- Standard unadjuvanted flu vaccine
- Cell-based flu vaccine
- Recombinant flu vaccine

cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/heartdisease. htm

Adults 65 or older with or without chronic conditions

The CDC recommends the use of enhanced flu vaccines (including high dose and recombinant) or adjuvanted flu vaccines over standard flu vaccines for adults 65 years and older whenever possible.

Discuss benefits, risks, and considerations of:

- High-dose flu vaccine
- Recombinant flu vaccine
- Adjuvanted flu vaccine

cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/65over.htm

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