

Tips for Talking to Patients and Families About Flu Vaccines



Talking to patients and families about the importance of getting a flu vaccine can make a difference. The statements below help to re-frame being vaccinated from an individual responsibility to collective responsibility. These are evidence based re-framing statements adapted from a report generated by the Frameworks Institute and the AAP.



Make the Flu Vaccine Accessible for All

Think about how your clinic can improve access to flu vaccines for your patients and families. Barriers like lack of transportation or paid time off work exist.

- Can you vaccinate a whole family while they are there for a pediatric well-visit?
- Can you have a clinic on nights or weekends?

Talk about the benefits of flu vaccination for the common good.

“It benefits all of us if every child in our community is vaccinated against the flu, because it means that all of us are more likely to be healthy.”

Focus on how flu vaccines benefit children’s and adolescents’ long-term health and wellbeing.

“Vaccination throughout childhood and adolescence is essential because it allows children’s immune system to recognize and resist diseases. This will help them develop and live healthy lives into adulthood.”

You can also use a literacy metaphor to explain how the immune system learns how to respond to flu viruses through vaccination.

“It’s similar to the process we use to learn to read or write. We have to start with letters or text, then our bodies can recognize or learn words and sentences. Flu vaccines are the text and words for our body to learn and recognize (and respond to) flu viruses.”

You can use computer updates as another metaphor to explain how the immune system improves its performance through flu vaccination.

“Computers or apps need updates to operate smoothly and be protected from threats. Flu vaccines help the body’s immune system operate efficiently and improve its performance each flu season.”

