



Risk Communication Toolkit:
Seasonal Influenza
for
Oregon Local Public Health Authorities and Tribes

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Suggested Communications Metrics

The goal of risk communications for the health sector is to improve health outcomes by encouraging health behaviors that reduce risk. If your agency has ability to collect health and health behavior information, consider selecting one or two key metrics when you design, monitor and test your communications plans. This can be in addition to any metrics you may normally use related to timeliness, accuracy and reach. The list below is illustrative of the types of metrics that could be incorporated into your communications project cycle. It is not intended to be exhaustive nor to fit every county. So be creative and monitor what works for your local or tribal health authority:

- Vaccination rate (population as a whole)
- Vaccination rate among health workers
- Vaccination rate among residents at long-term care facilities
- Attendance at vaccination clinics
- Number of handwashing workshops/number of facilities distributing handwashing flyers
- Number of outreach workshops for high risk populations about increasing handwashing
- Increased recognition of flu emergency warning signs
- Care seeking behaviors. This would need to be defined further based on the behavior you want to look at (e.g., visits to doctors, use of emergency department, etc.)
- Vaccination rates, health behaviors, among high risk group(s)

Keep in mind that selecting health metrics may create opportunities to publicly celebrate public health successes or improve your messaging.

General tools

Seasonal Influenza Communications Checklist

Flu typically circulates in the fall and winter months, but the flu season communications cycle has activities year-round. Activities from the previous and upcoming seasons often overlap. This checklist covers one cycle.

Pre-season

- Review immunization recommendations and begin adapting communications plan. (January/February)
- Monitor immunization supply issues in collaboration with Oregon Immunization Program. (January-July)
- Anticipate unique communications needs for upcoming season. (January-July)
- Review baseline influenza data; collaborate with SMEs to select metrics to monitor influenza activity in your county.
- Determine the needs related to communications materials or target audiences; test messaging as possible.
- Translate documents when needed.
- Engage influenza partners.
- Finalize communications plan and materials. (Late July-Early August)
 - Consider a start of school campaign. (September/October)
 - Consider a health worker campaign. (October/November)
 - Consider celebrating National Influenza Vaccination Week. (first week of December)
 - Consider participating in #FluFactFriday.
- Participate in the Oregon Health Authority Flu Season Kickoff Call. (August)

During season

- As needed, coordinate with OHA on communications related to vaccine and antiviral supply issues, outbreaks or concerns about pandemic influenza. (August-March)
- Promote influenza vaccine and clinics. (September-March)
- Begin other prevention, treatment, and care seeking messaging based on surveillance data. (once flu activity is starting to increase)
- Intensify messaging. (once influenza seems to be increasing toward peak levels)
- Monitor for vaccine and antiviral shortages, delays and adverse events; communicate updates to stakeholders as needed. (September through following January/March);
- Encourage long-term care facilities and schools to report outbreaks of influenza-like illness (ILI) occurring in their facilities to public health.

Post-season

- Review and evaluate communications plan. (June)
- Determine areas of improvement. (June)
- Celebrate successes and share lessons learned with stakeholders. (June)

Revised and updated on December 29, 2016

Talking Points for Seasonal Influenza

Select the points you will use based on the timing during flu season and reason for use:

- Flu is a virus that causes respiratory illness.
- Flu can cause mild to severe illness. Some of those who have the flu need hospital care.
- Flu kills thousands of people each year.
- People who are at higher risk of severe illness or death include children, adults over 65, pregnant women and those who have chronic medical conditions or weak immune systems.
- **The flu vaccine is the best protection against flu. Go get vaccinated!**
 - Vaccinations are recommended for every one 6 months of age and older.
 - It is especially important for children 6 months and older, pregnant women, those with chronic medical conditions or weak immune systems, adults over 65 years of age, and health care workers.
 - Flu vaccine is available from health care providers, local health departments and many pharmacies.
 - To find where you can find a flu vaccine visit www.flu.oregon.gov to use our vaccine locator or call 211 toll free.
- Other ways to help prevent flu:
 - Stay home and limit contact with others if you are sick, including staying home from work or school when you are sick.
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue out when you are done.
 - Wash hands with soap and water. Use an alcohol based hand rub if soap and water are not available.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
 - Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may have flu germs on them.
 - Avoid getting coughed and sneezed on.
- If you get sick, rest and get plenty of fluids. See a doctor if you are concerned about your illness; take antivirals if they are prescribed to you; and stay home.
- Seek urgent medical care for a child for flu if they show signs of severe illness. These signs include: fast or difficult breathing, skin that is bluish in color, rash, not drinking enough fluids, not waking up or interacting, they are so irritable they do not want to be held, or they have flu-like symptoms that improve but return with a fever and worse cough.
- In addition to the signs above, get medical help right away for any infant who has any of these signs: they are not able to eat; have trouble breathing; have no tears when they cry or have a lot fewer wet diapers than usual.
- Seek urgent medical care for an adult who has the flu if: breathing is difficult or they have shortness of breath; they have pain or pressure in their chest or abdomen; they are vomiting; they have sudden dizziness; they are confused; or they have flu-like symptoms that improve but return with a fever and worse cough.

Sample Press Release: General Early Season Vaccination Promotion

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: [Name]

[County] Health Department

Phone [(XXX) XXX-XXXX]

Email [email address]

[Agency] The best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated each year.

Residents are advised to get vaccinated, wash hands, cover coughs and sneezes, and stay home when sick.

[CITY NAME, OREGON] – Health officials recommend getting the flu vaccine to prevent the spread of illness in **[County]**. Flu is not just a bother; it can be deadly. People age 65 years or older, children, pregnant women and those with weak immune systems or chronic medical conditions are at higher risk for severe illness, complications and death.

“Getting vaccinated is the most effective way to prevent the flu,” said **[Name, Title]** here. “Every one six months and older should be vaccinated every year to prevent illness in themselves and others.”

You can also do additional things avoid getting sick with the flu:

- Wash hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Stay home when sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Keep surfaces that may have flu germs on them cleaned and disinfected.

When more people are vaccinated against the flu, less flu can spread through the community. Call 211 or **[Provide link or phone number]** for information on local vaccine clinics.

Sample Press Release: Mid to Late Season Vaccination Promotion

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: [Name]

[County] Health Department

Phone [(XXX) XXX-XXXX]

Email [email address]

[Agency] Flu season is in full swing in [County].

Health officials remind people to get vaccinated, wash hands, cover coughs and sneezes, and stay home when sick.

[CITY NAME, OREGON] – [XX] Flu activity increases in [County] [Insert more statistics available]

[LPHA/Tribal Authority name] has received reports of increased influenza illness in the past **[time period]**.

“It’s not too late to get a flu vaccine. Anyone over 6 months old should get one. Children over six months, adults over 65, pregnant women, and those who have weak immune systems or a chronic medical condition really shouldn’t wait any longer,” said **[Name, Title]**. “For these groups, flu can cause severe illness and even death.” Healthcare workers should get their flu vaccine to help protect their patients – especially those patients who are at the highest risk for complications from the flu.

The best way to protect against the flu is to get a flu vaccine. Additional steps people can take to protect themselves and others from the flu are to:

- Wash hands often with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Stay home when sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Keep surfaces that may have flu germs on them cleaned and disinfected.

When more people are vaccinated against the flu, less flu can spread through the community. Call 211 or **[Provide link or phone number]** for information on local vaccine clinics.

Sample Press Release: Mid to Late Season Flu Care

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: [Name]

[County] Health Department

Phone [(XXX) XXX-XXXX]

Email [email address]

[Agency] Does the Flu have you feeling down? What to do if you've got the flu

Got the flu? Take care of yourself, know when to see a health care provider and prevent spreading it.

[CITY NAME, OREGON] –With the flu season still going, it is important for those who are sick with the flu to know how to take care of themselves and how to avoid spreading the flu to others.

“Most people will recover in a couple of weeks, and if they have mild illness do not need to go to the emergency room,” said **[Name, Title]** “If the signs of flu are mild, the best thing to do is to stay home, rest and avoid others. If you are at high risk or concerned about your illness, call your healthcare provider.”

Even though most people only have mild illness, some people with severe illness do need emergency care. Adults having a hard time breathing or shortness of breath; pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion, severe or persistent vomiting, purple or blue discoloration of the lips, or seizures should be seen promptly. This is also true for people with flu who get better, then have a fever and cough that return. Children should be seen urgently if they have fast or troubled breathing, bluish skin color, are not waking up or interacting, become so irritable that they do not want to be held, or a fever with a rash. They should also be seen if symptoms of the flu get better, but then come back with a fever and cough. Infants should get medical help right away if they are unable to eat, have a hard time breathing, do not have tears when they cry, or have many fewer wet diapers than normal.

People at higher risk of severe illness from influenza include: people age 65 years or older, children, pregnant women, and those with chronic medical conditions or weak immune systems. These people should talk to their healthcare provider if they develop fever along with cough or sore throat. These may be signs of the flu, and these folks might benefit from early treatment with antiviral medicine.

People who have been sick should protect others from the flu. They should stay home for 24 hours after their fever is gone, wash their hands often or use alcohol rubs when soap isn't available. They should also cover their nose and mouth with a tissue or their elbow when they cough or sneeze. Once they are better, those who have the flu can get a flu vaccine to avoid getting sick with other types of flu and to help protect others.

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Seasonal Influenza Printable Materials

The following websites contain printable flu materials that are available for download from CDC.

General Public <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/print-general.htm>

Vulnerable Populations

- High Risk Conditions: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/print-highrisk.htm>
- Pregnant Women: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/print-pregnant.htm>
- Seniors 65+ Years: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/print-seniors.htm>
- Children (via families and schools)
 - General Resources includes: Flyers, Guides for Parents, school guides on cleaning and teaching children about the flu, OB/GYN cards and more: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/print-family.htm>
 - “Are you a flu fighter?” Coloring Book: <http://www.nfid.org/coloring-book>

Specific Populations

- Native American: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/print-native.htm>
- For Businesses/Employers: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/print-businesses.htm>
- Health Care Workers: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/print-healthcare.htm>

Alternative Languages

Spanish

- Spanish printable posters: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/print-spanish.htm>
- “Are you a flu fighter?” Coloring Book: <http://www.nfid.org/coloring-book-spanish>
- CDC Immigrant and Refugee resources flu page :
<http://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/resources/index.html>

Other Languages

- CDC Immigrant and Refugee resources flu page :
<http://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/resources/index.html>

Languages available include:

- Amharic
- Arabic
- Burmese
- Dzongkha
- English
- Farsi
- Karen
- Kirundi
- Nepali
- Oromo
- Somali

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

These video and radio PSAs are available in Spanish and English, and resources for American Indian/Alaskan Native Audiences (Lakota, Navajo, Yupik) <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/media-psa.htm>

Social Media Messages for Seasonal Influenza

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/OregonImmunize>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/OregonImmunize>

Key Hashtags: #flu #FluFactFriday #FluVax

Personalize your agency's social media messages:

- Highlight local clinics.
- Share photos of staff or partners who have recently received their flu shot.
- Start a photo-sharing contest with photos from people who have received their shot.

Mobile Content

CDC Influenza Mobile Application for Clinicians and Health Care Professionals:

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/apps/cdc-influenza-hcp.html>

Ecards for Influenza Awareness:

Includes cards for children, pregnant women, adults over 65, chronic medical conditions, health care workers, and holiday/seasonal reminders: <http://t.cdc.gov/ecards/browse.aspx?category=175>

Note: Some groups may need to consider how they use these materials. Encourage organizations to review their own privacy policies and read the privacy policies of CDC to ensure appropriate use. CDC Privacy Policies and Regulations website can be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/Other/policies.html>

Outbreak Tools

Letter to residents of independent living or long-term care facilities

Note we recommend a larger font, at least 14 point .

[Date]

[Address of LPH/Tribal Authority]

Dear resident,

The **[insert LPH/Tribal Authority Name]** is working closely with the Oregon Health Authority and **[insert property management or facility name]** to manage an outbreak of respiratory illness, **[influenza (flu) in particular]**.

Due to how severe **[flu]** can be and the number of **[flu]** cases at this **[property/ facility]**, **[insert LPH/Tribal Authority Name]** strongly recommends that every resident get an antiviral medication. Both those with and those without respiratory illness should seek these medications. This will help protect you. It will also slow the spread of **[flu]** in your community. **[Insert LPH/Tribal Authority Name]** will write a prescription for the antiviral medication for residents without a health care provider.

You may have been exposed to the flu already but do not feel sick yet. We also suggest: **[adjust items below as needed depending on type of respiratory illness, items below are for flu]**

- Any resident who has signs of flu should talk to their health care provider. Signs include:
 - Fever, feeling feverish or chills*
 - cough
 - sore throat
 - runny or stuffy nose
 - muscle or body aches
 - headaches
 - fatigue or feeling very tired
- Any resident who has signs of the flu should seek emergency care if they have:
 - a hard time breathing or shortness of breath
 - sudden dizziness
 - confusion
 - severe or constant vomiting
 - flu-like symptoms that get better but return with fever and a worse cough

Sincerely,

[Insert signature line]

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Letter to physicians regarding prophylaxis

[Date]

Dear provider,

The **[insert LPH/Tribal Authority Name]** is working closely with the Oregon Health Authority and **[insert property management or facility name]** to manage an outbreak of respiratory illness in residents of this **[senior development or living facility]**. There are currently **[insert #]** residents ill with influenza-like (flu-like) illness. **[insert #]** have been hospitalized and **[insert #]** ill resident has tested positive for [type of flu or respiratory disease].

In accordance with the current CDC recommendations for flu outbreak management in long-term care facilities

(<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/ltc-facility-guidance.htm#>), we recommend the following actions:

- All long-term care facility residents who have confirmed or suspected flu should seek immediate antiviral treatment.
- All non-ill residents, regardless of their flu vaccination status, should be given antiviral chemoprophylaxis.

We have also provided a letter to residents asking them to seek prophylaxis. We have also advised them of the following:

- All residents who experience signs of flu should consult their physician. Signs include fever or feeling feverish or chills, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, fatigue or feeling very tired. Please note that some people may have vomiting or diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults. Not all people who have the flu will have a fever.
- Any resident who has signs of the flu and experiences difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion, severe or persistent vomiting, or flu-like symptoms that improve but return with fever and a worse cough should seek emergency care.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns [insert contact information]. We greatly appreciate your assistance. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Insert signature line]

Sample provider alert

Influenza activity is rapidly increasing in Oregon. There were **[insert number]** outbreaks reported from **[insert dates]**, compared with **[insert number]** reported during **[insert timeframe]**. Through **[insert date]** **[insert number]** laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza have been reported in **[jurisdiction]** this season.

We remind providers of the following:

1. Do no harm! Stick out **your** arm! All health care providers and staff should receive their annual influenza vaccination if they have not already. This protects the providers, staff and patients.
2. Long-term care facilities should follow [CDC guidelines for influenza outbreak management](#). Facilities without standing orders for influenza vaccination and, when cases are identified, for antiviral treatment and prophylaxis, should establish them. Facilities with standing orders should remind staff existing orders if they have not done so already this season.
3. Use antiviral medications to treat and prevent influenza as indicated. Currently, recommended antivirals are oseltamivir (Tamiflu), zanamivir (Relenza), and peramivir (Rapivab). Please consult CDC for [detailed antiviral guidance](#).
4. Refer patients who have influenza-like illness or influenza for emergency care if they present with the following additional symptoms:
 - a. **Pediatric patients-** with fast or troubled breathing, bluish skin color, are not waking up or interacting, become so irritable that they do not want to be held or a fever with a rash. Refer if influenza symptoms improve, but return with a fever and cough. Refer infants for emergency care if they are unable to eat, have difficulty breathing, do not have tears when they cry, or have many fewer wet diapers than normal.
 - b. **Adult patients-** with difficulty breathing or shortness of breath, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion, severe or persistent vomiting, purple or blue discoloration of the lips, or seizures. Refer if influenza symptoms improve, but return with a fever and cough.
5. Promote use of the influenza vaccine among health care personnel, clients and patients, particularly for those in high-risk groups: people age 65 years or older, children, pregnant women, and those with chronic medical conditions or weak immune systems. Use the revised 2016-2017 ACIP recommendations for [seasonal influenza vaccines](#). Flumist is **not** recommended for the 2016-2017 season.

If you have any additional questions, please see the Oregon Health Authority [guidelines for reporting, testing and outbreak investigation](#), consult the resources below, or call **[insert contact information]**.

Start of School Tools

Talking points for parents

- Right after kids go back to school is a good time to talk to your child's doctor about when you can get your child's flu vaccination because flu season usually starts sometime in the fall and peaks somewhere between January and March.
- A flu vaccine at the beginning of the school year will help prevent the flu throughout the school year.
- Having your child vaccinated makes it harder for the flu to spread, which helps protect other children too – including those with higher risk from medical conditions.
- The flu vaccine is important for kids because they have a higher risk of complications or other illnesses linked to the flu than most adults.
- Kids with chronic medical conditions – like asthma – are at an even higher risk than healthier children are.
- Signs of the flu typically include: fever or feeling feverish, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, and feeling very tired. Some people may also throw up or have diarrhea. This is more common for kids than for adults.
- Parents can also help keep their kids healthy and prevent the spread of flu this flu season by having kids:
 - Wash their hands often or use alcohol rubs when soap isn't available.
 - Stay home from school when they are sick.
 - Cover their nose and mouth with a tissue or their elbow when they cough or sneeze.
 - Avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth.
- Parents and teachers should disinfect surfaces that may have flu germs. Kids and school staff should stay home if they are sick.
- Most kids will get over the flu in a couple of weeks without needing to see a doctor. Flu can be serious in children though, and parents and teachers should know emergency signs of flu in children:
 - Fast or difficult breathing
 - Bluish colored skin
 - Fever with rash
 - Child is irritable and does not want to be held
 - Not drinking fluids
 - Will not wake up or interact
 - Has signs of flu that get better but returns with fever and a worse cough
- Adults get the flu too!
 - If you are scheduling your kid's vaccine, you might as well schedule yours also.
 - Teachers, protect yourself and your students – make it part of your own back to school routine.

Sample Press Release: Early Season- Start of School Vaccine Promotion

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: [Name]

[County] Health Department

Phone [(XXX) XXX-XXXX]

Email [email address]

[Agency] The kids are back in school! It's a perfect time to schedule a flu vaccine for your child.

Health officials advise parents to get kids vaccinated, teach them flu prevention, and recognize danger signs.

[CITY NAME, OREGON] – Health officials advise parents in **[City or County]** to get the flu vaccine for their kids.

“Getting your kids vaccinated early in the school year will help protect them throughout the school year no matter when the flu strikes your school,” said **[Name, Title]**. Health officials recommend the flu vaccine for anyone over six months of age. Kids and school staff should stay home if they are sick.

Parents can also help keep their kids healthy this flu season by teaching kids to: wash their hands often or use alcohol rubs when soap isn't available; stay away from people who are sick; cover their nose and mouth with a tissue or their elbow when they cough or sneeze; and avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth. Parents and teachers should disinfect surfaces that may have flu germs.

Signs of the flu typically include: fever or feeling feverish, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches, and feeling very tired. Some people may also throw up or have diarrhea. This is more common for kids than for adults. Most people can get over the flu in about two weeks, but for some it can be serious – even deadly. It can also lead to other infections, like pneumonia. People most at risk for serious complications include children, pregnant women and adults over 65, and people with chronic medical conditions or weak immune systems.

Even though most kids get over the flu, parents should be aware of when to seek medical care if their kid does get the flu. Parents should seek medical care right away if their child experiences: fast or difficult breathing, bluish colored skin, or fever with rash. Parents should also seek medical care if their child is irritable and does not want to be held, is not drinking fluids, will not wake up or interact or seems to get better but then has signs of illness return with a fever and worse cough.

Flu can spread anytime. In Oregon, cases usually start increasing in the fall and often peak somewhere between January and March. Parents can find out where to have their child vaccinated by calling their health care provider, calling 211 toll free or using the Flu Vaccine Finder: <http://flushot.healthmap.org/> .

Seasonal Influenza Printable Materials for Start of School

The following websites contain printable flu materials that are available for download from CDC.

For Kids

- “Are you a flu fighter?” Coloring Book:
 - English: <http://www.nfid.org/coloring-book>
 - Spanish: <http://www.nfid.org/coloring-book-spanish>

For Parents:

- What could your kid miss? Poster:
http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/updated/whatcouldchildmiss_teen_print.pdf
- The Flu: A guide for Parents:
 - English: https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/updated/fluguideforparents_brochure.pdf
 - Spanish: http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/spanish/flu_guide_parents_sp.pdf
- The Flu: A guide for Parents (trifold):
 - English: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/updated/fluguideforparents-trifold.pdf>
 - Spanish:
http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/spanish/flu_guide_parents_brochure_reverse_sp.pdf
 - Other languages: <http://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/resources/index.html>
- What to do if your Kid Has the Flu:
 - English: http://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/pdf/seasonal-flu/what_to_do_english_508.pdf
 - Other languages: <http://www.cdc.gov/immigrantrefugeehealth/resources/index.html>

For Schools:

- How to Clean and Disinfect Schools to Help Slow the Spread of Flu Flyer
http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/updated/cleaning_disinfecting_schools.pdf
- Teaching Children About the Flu Teaching Guide (ages 3 to 10):
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/updated/teachingchildrenflu.pdf>

Long-term Care Facility Tools

Talking Points for health workers

- Influenza is more likely to cause severe, sometimes fatal illness in people older than 65.
- In 2015 CDC reported that about 90% of flu deaths were in people aged 65 and older.
- Older Oregonians in long-term care are not able to avoid sick caregivers easily; if staff members get influenza, long-term care facility residents have a high risk of being exposed and becoming ill.
- Fifty-seven percent of influenza outbreaks reported to the Oregon Health Authority during the 2015-2016 season occurred in long-term care facilities.
- CDC reports that, with a good match between circulating strains and the ones included in the vaccine, flu vaccination is 90% effective in preventing disease in young, healthy folks. In the elderly, flu vaccine is 50-60% effective in preventing hospitalization and 80% effective in preventing death.
- You can pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick. Some people can be infected with the flu virus but have no symptoms. During this time, you may still spread the virus to others.
- Anyone sick with the flu should stay home for 24 hours after their fever ends and is no longer being controlled by fever reducing medicines.
- Protecting staff and residents from influenza decreases lost work time for staff members.
- Worker vaccination helps prevent severe illness and death from influenza in residents.
- Do no harm! Stick out your arm!

Talking Points for Long Term Care Facility Managers

- Influenza is more likely to cause severe, sometimes fatal illness in people older than 65.
- In 2015 CDC reported that about 90% of flu deaths were in people aged 65 and older.
- Older Oregonians in long-term care are not able to avoid sick caregivers easily; if staff members get influenza, long-term care facility residents have a high risk of being exposed and becoming ill.
- Fifty-seven percent of influenza outbreaks reported to the Oregon Health Authority during the 2015-2016 season occurred in long-term care facilities.
- CDC reports that, with a good match between circulating strains and the ones included in the vaccine, flu vaccination is 90% effective in preventing disease in young, healthy folks. In the elderly, flu vaccine is 50-60% effective in preventing hospitalization and 80% effective in preventing death.
- Protecting staff and residents from influenza decreases lost work time for staff members.
- Anyone sick with the flu stay should home for 24 hours after their fever ends, once it is no longer being lowered by fever reducing medicines.
- Worker vaccination helps prevent severe illness and death from influenza in residents.
- Patients and families can see how you are doing through the OHA Healthcare Worker Influenza Vaccination report available online.
- Encourage employees to 'Do no harm and stick out their arm!'
- An OHA pilot was conducted in partnership with a Local Public Health Authority partner. The goal was to increase vaccination rates at long-term care facilities.
- Pilot sites increased vaccination rates by approximately 37.
- The pilot identified some best practices to help management encourage staff to get their flu vaccine:
 - Use mobile carts to take vaccine to staff members during their shifts.
 - Use a form requiring that a staff member actively decline influenza vaccination if he or she chooses not to be immunized.
 - Provide vaccine at no charge.
 - Require masks during influenza season for unvaccinated staff.
 - Post signage or reminders about benefits of vaccination.
 - Provide incentives (for example, a gift card) for staff who get vaccinated.

Sample Press Release: Long-term Care Facility Campaign

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: [Name]

[County] Health Department

Phone [(XXX) XXX-XXXX]

Email [email address]

[Agency] Vaccination of health workers in long-term care facilities a cause for [celebration/ concern].

Health officials advise health workers to get vaccinated for flu in order to protect patients from flu.

[CITY NAME, OREGON] –Health officials from **[County]** are **celebrating** about the percent of health workers who are getting their flu vaccine. Officials are **celebrating** because getting the flu vaccine is the best way to prevent the spread of flu. Last year **[number of facilities]** in the county **[reached/made progress toward]** goals set for how many of their staff get the flu vaccine. The goal for 2020 is to have 90% vaccinated.

“We really want to thank our health care partners for the work they’ve done. When health care workers at long-term care facilities get vaccinated they help protect their patients,” said **[Name, Title]** “Most of the patients at these facilities are 65 and older. This group of patients doesn’t bounce back from the flu as easily; something that is annoying to the rest of us can be a serious and even deadly disease for them.”

Most adults only have the flu for a couple of weeks and do not need medical treatment. Adults who have the flu should seek urgent medical care if they have difficulty breathing, pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen, sudden dizziness, confusion, are throwing up a lot or very often, or have flu symptoms that get better but return with a fever and cough.

Health care workers are not required to get the flu vaccine, but facilities must report their health care workers’ vaccination rates to the Oregon Health Authority. Residents and family members who want to see how their health facility stacks up can look at the Healthcare Worker Influenza Vaccination report at:

<https://public.health.oregon.gov/DiseasesConditions/CommunicableDisease/HAI/Pages/Reports-and-Data.aspx>

Seasonal Influenza Printable Materials for Long Term Care Facilities

The following websites contain printable flu materials that are available for download from CDC.

Toolkit for Long-Term Care Employers: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/toolkit/long-term-care/resources.htm>

See 'Campaign Materials' for flyers, posters, factsheets, videos, websites and brochures that address the following audiences: employers, health care personnel and the general public.

Vaccinated Against Flu: 'I care about you' provider stickers:

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/healthcare/stickers-healthcare.pdf>

They fit Avery label numbers: 5160, 5260, 5920, 5960, 5970, 5971, 5972, 5979, 5980, 6460, 8160, 8250, 8460, 8660, 8920 and 8930

I Won't Spread Flu (Customizable)

- Flyer: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/healthcare/wont-spread-flu-11x8.5-custom.pdf>
- Poster <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/healthcare/wont-spread-flu-17x11-custom.pdf>
- Poster (Large): <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/healthcare/wont-spread-flu-24x18-custom.pdf>

Also available from Oregon Health Authority upon request: Long-Term Care Facilities Immunization Toolkit

National Influenza Vaccine Week Tools

National Influenza Vaccine Week is the first full week of December, annually.

Talking Points and Messages: CDC Influenza Vaccination Awareness Campaign

Taken directly from CDC. Select the points you will use based on your specific NIVW campaign:

- Influenza (the flu) can be a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death. Anyone can get sick from the flu.

- While the flu can make anyone sick, certain people are at greater risk for serious complications from the flu. These people include:
 - Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old
 - Adults 65 years of age and older
 - Pregnant women
 - American Indians and Alaskan Natives seem to be at higher risk
 - People who have medical conditions including:
 - Asthma
 - Neurological and neurodevelopmental conditions [including disorders of the brain, spinal cord, peripheral nerve, and muscle such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy (seizure disorders), stroke, intellectual disability (mental retardation), moderate to severe developmental delay, muscular dystrophy, or spinal cord injury]
 - Chronic lung disease (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease [COPD] and cystic fibrosis)
 - Heart disease (such as congenital heart disease, congestive heart failure and coronary artery disease)
 - Blood disorders (such as sickle cell disease)
 - Endocrine disorders (such as diabetes mellitus)
 - Kidney disorders
 - Liver disorders
 - Metabolic disorders (such as inherited metabolic disorders and mitochondrial disorders)
 - Weakened immune system due to disease or medication (such as people with HIV or AIDS, cancer, or those on chronic steroids)
 - People younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy
 - People who are morbidly obese (Body Mass Index, or BMI, of 40 or greater)

- For more information about people at high risk of serious flu-related complications visit: http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm
- Much of the U.S. population is at increased risk from serious flu complications, either because of their age or because they have a medical condition like asthma, diabetes (type 1 and 2), or heart conditions, or because they are pregnant.
- For example, more than 30 percent of people 50 through 64 years of age have one or more chronic medical conditions that put them at increased risk of serious complications from flu.
- Symptoms of the flu can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people may also have vomiting and diarrhea.
- People may also be infected with the flu and have no symptoms at all, or have only respiratory symptoms without a fever.
- Flu viruses are constantly changing. Each flu season, different flu viruses can spread, and they can affect people differently based on differences in their immune systems. Even healthy children and adults can get very sick from the flu.
- In the United States, thousands of healthy adults and children see a doctor or are hospitalized from flu complications each year. Flu vaccination can help protect you and your family from the flu and its complications.
- Flu seasons are unpredictable. The severity of flu seasons can differ substantially from year to year.

Vaccine

- The first and most important step in protecting against the flu is to get a flu vaccine each season.
 - Every one 6 months of age and older is recommended to get the flu vaccine, with rare exceptions.
- Flu vaccination can reduce flu illnesses, doctors' visits, and missed work and school due to flu, as well as prevent flu-related hospitalizations and deaths.
- While how well the flu vaccine works can vary from year to year, there are many reasons to get a flu vaccine each year.
 - Flu vaccination can keep you from getting sick from flu. Protecting yourself from flu also protects the people around you who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness.
 - Flu vaccination can help protect people who are at greater risk of getting seriously ill from flu, like older adults, people with chronic medical conditions and young children (especially infants younger than 6 months old who are too young to get vaccinated).
 - Flu vaccination also may make your illness milder if you do get sick.

- Flu vaccination can reduce the risk of more serious flu outcomes, like hospitalizations and deaths.

- CDC recommends an annual flu vaccine as the first and best way to protect against the flu. There are two important reasons to get a flu vaccine every year:
 - The first reason is that because flu viruses are constantly changing, flu vaccines may be updated from one season to the next to protect against the viruses that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming flu season.
 - The second reason that annual vaccination is recommended is that a person's immune protection from the vaccine declines over time. Annual vaccination is needed for best protection.

- Flu vaccination prevented an estimated 13.6 million flu cases, 5.8 million medical visits and nearly 113,000 flu-related hospitalizations in the United States over a six-year period (from 2005 to 2011) according to a study by CDC experts.

- The composition of the flu vaccine is reviewed each year. If needed, the vaccine is updated to protect against the influenza viruses that research indicates will be the most common during the upcoming season. Even in years when the vaccine composition does not change, new flu vaccine is manufactured every season. (All seasonal flu vaccine expires by the end of June.)

- Protect your family from the flu by getting yourself and your family members vaccinated.

- Medicare covers both flu and pneumonia vaccines with no co-pay or deductible. Children eligible for Medicaid and CHIP are eligible for ACIP recommended vaccines at no cost.

- For more information about the seriousness of influenza and the benefits of influenza vaccination, talk to your doctor or nurse, visit www.cdc.gov/flu, www.flu.gov/, or call CDC at 1-800-CDC-INFO.

Sample Press Release: National Influenza Vaccination Week

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: [Name]

[County] Health Department

Phone [(XXX) XXX-XXXX]

Email [email address]

[NAME OF YOUR DEPARTMENT] Holds Flu Shot Clinic as Part of National Influenza Vaccination Week

[CITY, State]—Today, **[NAME OF YOUR DEPARTMENT]** is hosting a **[EVENT]**, which is expected to involve more than **[MINIMUM NUMBER OF EXPECTED PARTICIPANTS]** from **[NAME(S) OF AREA(S)]**. Some of the activities planned for today include **[LOCAL ACTIVITIES]**.

[INCLUDE ANY OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION REGARDING YOUR EVENT HERE.]

This year's National Influenza Vaccination Week provides a good opportunity for our community to tell people how important it is for people to get an annual flu shot," said **[Name, Title]**. "Getting vaccinated is the single best way for people to protect not only themselves against flu, but their loved ones as well."

For more information about influenza and influenza vaccine, visit www.cdc.gov/flu and **[INSERT DEPARTMENT/ORGANIZATION WEBSITE, IF APPLICABLE]**.

National Influenza Vaccine Week Online Resources

NIVW Landing page: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/animated-nivw.htm>

Has printable resources, images, web tools and animated images. CDC updates this annually. Please check the dating of materials before using.

Flu Background

What we know about seasonal influenza

In Oregon, seasonal influenza often peaks in January to March. Every flu season is different, and influenza can affect people differently. Even healthy children and adults can get very sick from the flu and spread it to others. Over a period of 30 years, between 1976 and 2006, CDC estimates of flu-associated deaths in the United States range from a low of about 3,000 to a high of about 49,000 people.

Transmission

Influenza is a virus that spreads from person-to-person, through the air and on hard surfaces as well as in droplets from sneezes and coughs.

Risks

Most people will recover from the flu in less than two weeks. For some people, the flu can be a very serious, even deadly disease. Anyone could have complications from the flu, but those at highest risk are:

- People 65 and older
- Pregnant women
- Young children
- Those with chronic medical conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease
- Those with weak immune systems due to disease or medication, HIV, cancer or those on chronic steroids

Common complications for high-risk groups include:

- Pneumonia
- Bronchitis
- Sinus and ear infections

Worsening chronic conditions (e.g., asthma, chronic heart disease)

Signs and symptoms of flu

Illness from the flu can last for 10 days or more. People who have the flu often feel some or all of these signs and symptoms:

- Fever* or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue (very tired)
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

**It is important to note that not every one with flu will have a fever.*

Prevention

1. **Flu vaccine for every one over 6 months!**
2. Wash your hands often. Use alcohol based hand rubs when soap isn't available.
3. Limit close contact with sick people.
4. Limit your contact with others when sick.
5. Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze.
6. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
7. Clean and disinfect surfaces that may have germs.

Care and treatment

In most cases people with flu have mild illness and need increased rest, fluids, and acetaminophen or ibuprofen for fever. Generally, people with signs of flu should stay home and avoid contact with others. Some people do need emergency care. Antiviral drugs are recommended for anyone in one of the high-risk groups mentioned above or who is sick enough to need hospital care. A health care provider will decide if antiviral drugs are necessary. People should get medical help right away if they have any of the following emergency signs:

In children

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In adults

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough

In addition to the signs above, get medical help right away for any infant who has any of these signs:

- Are unable to eat
- Has trouble breathing
- Has no tears when crying
- Significantly fewer wet diapers than normal

What we know about inactivated influenza vaccine

Flu vaccine *can*:

- Keep you from getting flu.
- Make flu less severe if you do get it.
- Keep you from spreading flu to your family and other people.
- Take about 2 weeks to develop protection after vaccination and protection lasts through the flu season.

Flu vaccine *cannot prevent*:

- Flu that is caused by a virus not covered by the vaccine.
- Illnesses that look like flu but are not.

Recommendations:

- A dose of flu vaccine is recommended every flu season.
- Some children 6 months through 8 years of age may need two doses during the same flu season.
- Everyone else needs only one dose each flu season.

Some people should not get this vaccine. So that the person giving you your vaccine can offer advice for your condition, tell the person who is giving you the vaccine:

- **If you have any severe, life-threatening allergies.** If you ever had a life-threatening allergic reaction after a dose of flu vaccine or have a severe allergy to any part of this vaccine, you may be advised not to get vaccinated. Most, but not all, types of flu vaccine contain a small amount of egg protein. People with egg allergies can and should still get the flu vaccine. Those with severe egg allergies should be advised to receive their vaccine in a medical setting able to recognize and manage severe allergic reactions.
- **If you ever had Guillain-Barré Syndrome (also called GBS).** Some people with a history of GBS should not get this vaccine. This should be discussed with your doctor.
- **If you are not feeling well.** It is usually okay to get flu vaccine when you have a mild illness, but you might be asked to come back when you feel better.

Contents:

- There is no live flu virus in flu shots. **They cannot cause the flu.**
- There are many flu viruses, and they are always changing. Each year a new flu vaccine is made to protect against three or four viruses that are likely to cause disease in the upcoming flu season. Even when the vaccine doesn't exactly match these viruses, it may still provide some protection.
- Some flu vaccine vials have multiple doses of flu vaccine and contain a very small amount of a mercury-based preservative called thimerosal. Studies have not shown thimerosal in vaccines to be harmful, but flu vaccines that do not contain thimerosal are available.

Risks of a vaccine reaction

With any medicine, including vaccines, there is a chance of reactions. These are usually mild and go away on their own, but serious reactions are also possible. Most people who get a flu shot do not have any problems with it. If problems occur, they usually begin soon after the shot and last one or two days.

Minor problems following a flu shot include:

- Soreness, redness or swelling where the shot was given
- Hoarseness
- Sore, red or itchy eyes
- Cough
- Fever
- Aches
- Headache
- Itching
- Fatigue

More serious problems following a flu shot can include:

- There may be a small increased risk of Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) after inactivated flu vaccine. This risk has been estimated at one or two additional cases per million people vaccinated. This risk is much lower than the risk of severe complications from flu, which flu vaccines can prevent.
- Young children who get the flu shot along with pneumococcal vaccine (PCV13) or DTaP vaccine at the same time might be slightly more likely to have a seizure caused by fever. Ask your doctor for more information. Tell your doctor if a child who is getting flu vaccine has ever had a seizure.

Problems that could happen after any injected vaccine:

- People sometimes faint after a medical procedure, including vaccination. Sitting or lying down for about 15 minutes can help prevent fainting and injuries caused by a fall. Tell your doctor if you feel dizzy, or have vision changes or ringing in the ears.
- Some people get severe pain in the shoulder and have difficulty moving the arm where a shot was given. This happens very rarely.
- Any medication can cause a severe allergic reaction. Such reactions from a vaccine are very rare, estimated at about 1 in a million doses, and would happen within a few minutes to a few hours after the vaccination.

As with any medicine, there is a very remote chance of a vaccine causing a serious injury or death.

The safety of vaccines is always being monitored. For more information, visit the vaccine safety website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccinesafety/index.html>.