



Tips to Improve Vaccination Rates in Home Health Services

You, our home care providers, are vital to public health initiatives, like increasing immunization rates, that positively impact publicly reported flu quality measures. Opportunities to increase immunizations occur throughout the home care episode, including on admission, during the episode of care and as part of the discharge planning process.



Tip: Treat vaccination documentation like advance care planning documents. Information should travel with each patient across the continuum of care.

Maximize Vaccine Acceptance:

- Train staff on best practices
- Consider health literacy when addressing reasons for declination

Step 1: Assume the patient will immunize. Use a presumptive statement: “You are due for your flu vaccination. I will give it to you before our visit ends today.” OR talk about what you and the patient will be doing during the visit, including administering their flu shot. If the patient is hesitant or unsure, go to Step 2.

Step 2: Give your strong recommendation. “I strongly recommend you get the flu vaccine today.” OR describe the benefits in a way the patient can relate to so that it’s easily understandable or attractive. If hesitant or unsure, go to Step 3.

Step 3: Explore the reason for hesitancy/refusal. Ask open-ended questions to learn the patient’s reasons for being concerned or not wanting the vaccine OR share examples, stories and case studies of how others have already taken the vaccine and how it has helped.

Step 4: Ask permission to address concerns. If the patient agrees, address their concern using the Ask-Provide-Verify approach. Ask the patient what they know about the reason for hesitancy, provide information to address the issue, and verify that the information has been understood.

Step 5: Ask again if you can immunize. “I hope I was able to address your concerns. Can I provide the immunization now?” Immunize if they consent. If not, leave the door open for future discussion.

Pre-Admission:

- Screen for missed opportunities and request vaccination in their current location.
- Ask for vaccination documentation to be included in transfer documentation.
- Consider standing orders to administer vaccines. If there are no standing orders, call the physician for order(s).

During Each Encounter:

- Ask about vaccinations at each encounter. (Encounters can include routine visits and family meetings).
- Help work through any barriers – i.e., help locate vaccine records, schedule appointments, or help arrange for transportation.

Discharge Planning and Handoff:

- If a patient refuses vaccination, inform the provider of the reasons for declination, assistance offered, and recommendations for future discussion. (For example, Mrs. Smith declined three times during this episode of care. She prefers to wait until her daughter visits next month and can take her to the pharmacy. A tentative appointment was made for her to get her flu shot on October 28 at her local pharmacy.)
- If the patient was immunized during home health services, share updated immunization information.

[Resource: A 5-Step Approach to Discussing Vaccines and Addressing Vaccine Hesitancy](#)