



Flu Busters Outreach Guide

Letter to the Editor Writing Tips

1. Brief: Maximum of 150 words.
2. Relevant: Respond to a timely topic or specific article.
3. Personal: Your story or the story of someone close to you that relates to the topic.
4. Local: Why should fellow residents care? Provide statistics, references.

What is a Flu Buster?

A Flu Buster is someone who protects themselves, their loved ones, and their community from the flu by getting vaccinated and encouraging others to do the same!

Flu Vaccine Talking Points

1. Flu vaccination is recommended annually for anyone aged 6 months and up.
2. Flu vaccines CANNOT cause flu. Flu vaccines are made with either killed or weakened viruses.
3. Seasonal flu outbreaks can begin as early as October. Vaccinate sooner, rather than later!
4. By getting vaccinated, you help protect yourself, your family, and your community.
5. Healthy adults infect others 1 day before symptoms develop, and 5 to 7 days after becoming sick. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick. Some people infected with the flu virus have no symptoms, and are infectious to others.
6. People with a high risk of complications from the flu include those 65 years and older, children younger than 5 years, pregnant women, and people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes, or heart and lung disease.
7. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends an annual flu vaccine as the first and best way to protect against influenza. This recommendation is the same even during years when the vaccine composition (the viruses the vaccine protects against) remains unchanged from the previous season.
8. Vaccinefinder.org provides live information about where to get the flu shot near you.
9. Flu vaccination is free with most medical insurance. For those without coverage, Montgomery County's Health Department offers free flu shot events throughout the season. Wholesale clubs, drugstores, and chain grocers typically offer flu shots for \$30-40, to those without insurance.

General Vaccine Talking Points

10. Vaccines are safe and effective.
11. Patients need vaccinations throughout their life, including during adulthood. Patients should ask their physician what vaccinations they need.
12. According to the CDC, every \$1 spent on childhood vaccinations saves \$6.30 in direct medical costs. Including lost work, disability, and death, the return increases to \$18.40.
13. If the US vaccinated every child, it would prevent 14 million cases of disease and 33,500 deaths during their lifetime.
14. No scientific evidence shows a link between vaccines and autism.
15. Students entering college often encounter vaccination requirements. Vaccinating children on the schedule recommended by their physician can help to prepare for these requirements.
16. Patient can keep track of their vaccinations through Maryland's ImmuNet vaccination registry.

Opportunities to Raise Awareness

1. National Influenza Vaccination Week in late fall/early winter
2. National Infant Immunization Week in April
3. National Immunization Awareness Month in August