

AETNA BETTER HEALTH® OF FLORIDA



The 3 P's of flu prevention

Even in a relatively mild season, the flu results in numerous hospitalizations, emergency and office visits, and missed school and work. Over the past 35 years, annual flu-related deaths have reached as high as 50,000 in a single season. Healthy kids and adults may be far less likely to suffer the more catastrophic consequences of the flu. However, it poses a risk to the very young, old and chronically ill in our households, schools and workplaces.

As health care professionals, we play a pivotal role in lessening the burden of flu-related suffering. With flu season rapidly approaching, it's time to think about the three P's: **Prepare, Prod and Prevent.**

Prepare:

- Become knowledgeable about current ACIP recommendations for this winter: www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/acip
- Order your vaccine stock early.
- If possible, create a separate nurse appointment list for patients only seeking flu and pneumonia vaccines.
 - Allow nurses to administer these vaccines without a doctor visit.
- Create a list of alternative sites where flu and pneumonia vaccines are available for your patients (i.e. retail clinics in drug stores, supermarkets and other local options).
- Review current testing and treatment recommendations:
www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/diagnosis
www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/summary-clinicians.htm

We thank you for joining us in our mission to promote optimal health for each and every one of our members.

Prod:

- Include a flu prevention statement in every patient contact.
 - You can suggest your office staff end every phone conversation with, “Just a reminder, we have flu shots available and strongly encourage that you protect yourself and your family.”
- Display flu prevention material prominently in your office and waiting area.
- Set an example by being the first in your office to be vaccinated.
 - See that your office/practice achieves 100 percent immunization of staff and family members as soon as possible.
- Identify and actively reach out to high-risk patients.

Prevent:

- Use every patient encounter as an opportunity to immunize (i.e. wellness exams, sports physicals, acute and chronic illness follow-up visits).
- Emphasize to patients the importance of basic infection-control measures (thorough and frequent hand-washing).
- Check to be sure children under five years old and eligible adults have received their pneumonia shots (pneumonia is the leading cause of flu-related deaths).
- Be sure all your patients in long-term care facilities, as well as their family members, are vaccinated.