



**BlueCross BlueShield
of Texas**

Influenza (Flu) Season 2020-2021

In the United States, we detect influenza (flu) viruses year-round in the United States. However, flu viruses are more prevalent during fall and winter seasons. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that in the 2019-2020 flu season there were approximately 48 million flu illnesses, half a million flu hospitalizations, and approximately 43 thousand flu deaths.

Blue Cross Blue Shield recommends annual influenza vaccination for everyone, 6 months and older.

Getting a flu vaccine is more important than ever during 2020-2021 to *protect yourself, your family, and your community* from the flu during the COVID-19 pandemic.¹

Provider Action: Continue to educate your patients and staff on the importance of the influenza vaccine for them and their family members. Use the CDC website which provides useful resources and key information for health care professionals about seasonal influenza. The most cost-effective treatment is prevention, always.²

There are two options for getting flu vaccines:

1. Provider offices
 - a. Ensure that an ample supply of current vaccines is available in preparation for this year's influenza season.
 - b. Reach out to your panel of patients to schedule their Texas Health Step checkups or well child checkups to administer their flu vaccine.
2. In lieu of provider office visits, pharmacies can provide influenza vaccines. Children ages 7 and up and all adults can get their flu shot at an *in-network* pharmacy without a prescription from their primary care provider.

Thank you for your continued partnership in providing the best care for our members, your patients.

Resources:

Reference and review the [BCBSTX Preventive Care Guidelines \(PCGs\)](#), [Clinical Practice Guidelines \(CPGs\)](#) and [THSteps for Medical Providers](#) which includes all current [vaccine schedules](#), [Immtrac2](#), and other important guidance for treating your patients.

By clicking this link, you will go to a new website/app ("site"). This new site may be offered by a vendor or an independent third party. The site may also contain non-Medicare related information. In addition, some sites may require you to agree to their terms of use and privacy policy.



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References:

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020). *Protect Your Health This Season*. Retrieved September 8, 2020, from <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/season/protect-your-health.html>

² Blue Cross Blue Shield of Texas (2020). *New Coronavirus Calls Attention to a Perennial Threat*. Retrieved September 8, 2020 from <https://www.bcbstx.com/newsroom/category/community-health/new-coronavirus-calls-attention-to-pandemic-possibilities>

³Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2020). *2019-2020 U.S. Flu Season: Preliminary Burden Estimates*. Retrieved September 8, 2020, from <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/burden/preliminary-in-season-estimates.html>

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