

Let's Talk About the Flu

A Flu Prevention Community Workshop

Leader Guide

Updated: May 2024

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All materials are available on the Arkansas Immunization Action Coalition website:

<https://www.immunizear.org/vaccine-workshop-toolkits>

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1. Goal and General Instructions

Goal: Participants will be able to describe flu symptoms and explain steps they can take to prevent the spread of the flu. We also hope that participants will be willing and able to get a flu vaccine by the end of the workshop.

Please use this Leader's Guide as a general guide for your workshop presentation.

This manual is designed to go with the *"Let's Talk About the Flu"* PowerPoint presentation and the *"Let's Talk About the Flu"* booklet. However, please note that this Leader's Guide can be used to present the information in the booklet without using the PowerPoint.

Feel free to customize your presentation to your audience. The workshop is designed to last no longer than one hour, but it can be flexible.

You may find that participants with higher literacy levels do not need the in-depth descriptions or demonstrations of concepts. Some instructions are designed to help explain things more fully to people that may not know some of the vocabulary words and concepts.

2. Prepare for the Workshop

Planning will help to make your workshop a great success.

A) Consider your audience.

If you are planning a workshop for people who do not speak English well, you may need to consider the following:

- Do you need to get an interpreter?
- Are the workshop materials in the appropriate language?

If you are planning for older adults, you might need to consider:

- Is your classroom handicapped accessible?
- Are the acoustics good or do you need a sound system?
- Is there easily accessible parking?
- Is morning or evening a better time?

Other considerations:

- Does your audience have special needs?
- What is the best day and time?
- Will your classroom location be convenient?
- Do you need to provide childcare?
- Are your refreshments appealing to your audience?

B) Decide on a date, time, and location.

- Check to be sure there are no other major events scheduled for your date.
- Try to locate your workshop near public transportation, if possible.
- If you have several participants from the same work location, see if the employer will let you schedule something at their work location during a lunch break or right after work.
- If you plan to use the PowerPoint Presentation provided, make sure you have access to:
 - Laptop computer
 - Projector
 - Screen or white wall

C) Advertise.

- Put an announcement in newsletters of your organization and any organizations with which your audience is likely to be affiliated.
- Emphasize that the workshop is **FREE**.
- Put up flyers where you think your intended audience might see them.
 - A flyer you can edit is on the website.
- Send a press release about your workshop to the local newspaper.
 - A press release you can edit is on the website.

D) Gather teaching tools.

- Print enough “*Let’s Talk About the Flu*” booklets for each attendee.
- Print one copy of the “*Sign-In Sheet*”.
- Print “*Photo Release Forms*” if you are taking pictures or using quotes from participants.
- Have pens or pencils available for attendees to encourage writing in the booklet.
- Optional: Gather blank name tags and Sharpies for attendees to write their names on.

E) Prepare the classroom.

- Make sure you have signs to direct people to the classroom.
- Prepare the room so it is comfortable (temperature, right-sized chairs, etc.).
- Make sure the classroom is big enough for the anticipated number of attendees.
- Be sure that everyone can see the speaker and screen/wall (if using the PowerPoint) from his or her chairs.
- Consider setting up tables to make it easy for participants to write in their copy of the workbook.
- Make sure the lighting is good.
- Test the presentation equipment in advance.
- Set up a registration table with the following:
 - “*Sign-in Sheet*”
 - “*Let’s Talk About the Flu*” booklets
 - Optional:
 - Name tags for participants
 - “*Photo Release Form*”
 - You may need attendees to sign this if you are taking pictures or using quotes from participants.

F) Prepare yourself.

- Review the PowerPoint and notes.
- Customize “Introduction” slide (slide 2) of the PowerPoint with your information.
- Become familiar with the “*Let’s Talk About the Flu*” booklet.
- Think about instances in your own life that you are willing to share related to the topics you are about to present.
 - Adults want to learn practical things that apply to real life.
 - Personalizing information helps to make it more interesting.
 - It helps to make you more warm and approachable.
- Think about potential questions that may come up and how you will answer them.
- Think about your nonverbal communication. You show warmth and friendliness through:
 - Facial expressions
 - Tone of voice
 - Body language
- Think about presenting with a positive attitude, especially for questions that you are asked.
 - **All questions are good questions!**

G) Other considerations.

- Would you like to offer refreshments during your workshop?
- Would you like to arrange for flu shots to be given after the workshop?
 - If so, contact an immunizing pharmacy or clinic. For more information on planning for flu shots to be given at your workshop, see the “Setting Up On-Site Flu Clinics” document in the “Additional Documents” document in the Flu Toolkit section on the website: <https://www.immunizear.org/vaccine-workshop-toolkits>
- Be prepared to let attendees know where they can get a flu shot.

3. The Workshop

Greet people and welcome them as they enter the classroom. Ask them to take a name tag from the registration table and fill in their first names so that you can call on them by name if they should have questions during your presentation. Ask them to fill out the “*Sign-In Sheet*” and the “*Photo Release Form*” (if you plan to take photos).

Slide 1- Let’s Talk About the Flu

You should have this slide displayed as people arrive and get settled.

Begin the workshop on time and end it on time. The workshop is designed to take no more than one hour. By being punctual, you show your respect for your audience and their time. Once everyone has been seated and appears comfortable, go to the front of the room and begin with introductions.

Slide 2- Introductions

Introduce yourself. Give your name, your title, and the organization that you represent. Give any additional information about your organization that you wish to share. Feel free to personalize Slide 2 of the “*Let’s Talk About the Flu*” PowerPoint with your own picture and information about yourself.

Then, offer an introductory exercise. If you have a larger group, you may want to simply have people go around and introduce themselves. You might take different approaches with a group that is already familiar with flu vaccines than one that is anxious about getting a flu vaccine. If you have a smaller group, you can do an exercise like the following:

A Sample Introductory Exercise:

- Have people partner with someone that they do not know.
- Ask people to interview their partner and find out:
 - Their name
 - Occupation
- Have each person, in turn, introduce their partner to the group.

Slide 3 – Overview

Say: “Today, we will be talking about:

- What the flu really is
- How to keep your family healthy
- What you should do if you get sick
- We will talk about flu vaccines
- We will talk about flu stories and concerns

Next, you will refer to the “*Let’s Talk About the Flu*” booklets. If the booklets were not handed out at the registration table, you will want to distribute them now. Make sure everyone has a copy.

Slide 4 – What is the Flu? (Booklet Page 1)

Say: “Let’s talk about the flu. Please turn to page 1 in your booklet. Looking at the page 1, can anyone tell me what causes the flu?” (If no one raises their hand, refer to the first sentence – “The flu is caused by a virus”.) Your response might be: “Yes, very good. Flu is caused by a germ called a virus. Another type of germ is called a bacteria. Illnesses caused by a bacteria are treated with an antibiotic. You may have had a sore throat that was caused by a bacteria, like strep throat, and you would have been given an antibiotic. But, the flu is caused by a virus, so an antibiotic will not get rid of the flu. However, flu can be treated by an anti-viral medicine that is only for the flu. Flu medications don’t treat other viruses and they work best if given within 48 hours of a person feeling sick. The flu usually comes on quickly and lasts around 7 days.”

Slide 5 – How Will I Know if I Have the Flu? (Booklet Page 1)

Say: “Can you tell me some of the symptoms or things that you feel when you are sick with the flu?”
The answers you should get in, no particular order, are:

- Fever
- Chills
- Body aches
- Cough
- Fatigue or sleepiness
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Sneezing

“Can anyone tell me what you feel like when you have fever, chills or body aches?”

The answers might be:

- Fever
 - Your body feels hot
 - Temperature over 100.4 F
 - Your body feels cold (followed by a feeling of warmth)
 - Sweating
- Chills
 - Feeling cold
 - Shaking
- Body aches
 - Muscles or bones hurting

Slide 5 – How Will I Know if I Have the Flu? (Booklet Page 1)

Say: “Other symptoms of the flu might be:

- Fatigue
 - Feeling really tired or sleepy
- Headache (Point to head)
 - Pain in the head
 - Pain in the neck
- Sore throat (Point to throat)
 - Pain in throat
 - Funny sounding voice
- Runny nose (Point to nose)
- Stuffy nose
- Sneezing
- Coughing

“Children might also have vomiting, diarrhea, or a belly ache. Adults can have these symptoms too, but they’re usually less common for adults. Not all children throw up and not everyone has a fever. But they are pretty common with the flu. If you have any combination of these symptoms, especially if you have a fever, you should go to the doctor’s office or pharmacy and get tested for the flu. Some pharmacies offer flu testing and can prescribe flu treatment.”

Slide 6 – How Can My Family Stay Healthy? (Booklet Page 2)

Say: “Please turn to page 2 in your booklet. The flu can be spread very easily from one person to another. Germs may pass around easily through a sneeze or touching surfaces with germs on them. It is important to prevent this spread in order to keep you and your family healthy. If one person gets sick, it puts all others around at risk of getting the flu, including family and loved ones. Thankfully, there are simple ways to prevent us all from getting sick and experiencing those symptoms that we just learned about. You should wash your hands with soap and water, but if soap and water are not available, you can use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Cough or sneeze into your elbow, or use a tissue. Get a flu vaccine every year.”

Slide 7 – How To Wash Hands Effectively (Booklet Page 2)

Say: “I am sure you all know how to wash your hands, but let’s take a closer look at how to wash your hands to get rid of germs.

1. Try to use warm water to wet your hands under running water.
2. Rub your hands together so that the soap gets lathery or bubbly.
3. Does anyone know how long to wash your hands? You want to rub your hands together with the soap and water for at least 30 seconds, or as long as it takes to sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice.
4. After singing and rubbing your hands together for 30 seconds, rinse your hands thoroughly with water.”

Note for Presenter: You might consider using a timer to show how long 30 seconds is, while you sing “Happy Birthday”. This may help people get an idea of how long 30 seconds really is. If you have a specific ethnic group and know of a song that would be more culturally appropriate, use that. Or, you could ask the group to come up with another song that they would prefer to use.

Slide 8 – And... (Booklet Page 2)

Say: “Once your hands are clean, use a paper towel or air dryer to dry them. Use the paper towel to also shut off the water if you can. Does anyone know why that is a good idea?”

Answers may include:

- There may be germs on the handle that someone else put there.
- You touched the handle with your germy hands before washing them and now will get those germs back on your hands.

Say: “If your hands are really dirty and you can see how dirty they are, you should wash with soap and water.”

Slide 9 – How To Use Hand Sanitizer (Booklet Page 2)

Say: “If you cannot use soap and water to wash your hands, you can use hand sanitizer. It works quickly and also gets rid of germs on your hands. To use the hand sanitizer:

- Put it in the palm of your hand (show the palm of your hand) and make sure you use enough to cover both hands completely.
- Rub your hands together.
- Rub it all over your hands including your fingers.
- Continue rubbing your hands together until your hands are dry.”

Slide 10 – What Else Can We Do? (Booklet Page 2)

Say: “So we know how to get rid of the germs once they get on our hands, but what should we do to avoid spreading the germs if you cough or sneeze? What should you do?”

Answers should include:

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue
- Wash your hands after using a tissue
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow

Say: “If you cough or sneeze into a tissue, throw away the tissue immediately and wash your hands afterwards. To avoid spreading germs, DO NOT cough or sneeze into your hands.”

Slide 11 – And... (Booklet Page 2)

Say: “If you know that someone has the flu, stay away from them. Try to stay at least 6 feet away from someone who is sick. If someone has flu symptoms, don’t take a chance on catching it too. Just stay away from them.”

Say: “People with the flu can actually spread it to others 24 hours or more **before** they have any symptoms, so that makes it hard to avoid everyone with the flu.”

Slide 12 – What Should I Do if I Get Sick? (Booklet Page 3)

Say: “Let’s look at page 3 in your booklet. It is important for you to stay home and rest if you get the flu.”

Ask: “What might be a good reason for going out of the house even though you have the flu?”

After listening to responses, you might say: “One of the only reasons to go out would be for a medical appointment. The doctor can do a flu test and prescribe an anti-viral medicine for you to take. If you are sick, please be sure to wear a mask whenever you leave the house.”

Slide 13 – Don’t Spread the Flu - Stay Home (Booklet Page 3)

Say: “Stay home until your fever is gone for a full 24 hours, which is one full day. Those 24 hours only count when you are not taking medicine that lower your fever, like Tylenol or ibuprofen. It is important to limit contact with others while having the flu, to protect them from getting sick. This means staying at home from whatever your commitments are (work, school, etc). And, while at home, it is important to stay away from others in the household or they will be at high risk of getting the flu. Take your temperature during this time with a thermometer. Normal temperature for most adults and children is 98.6 F. Once your temperature is back to normal, without taking medicines that lower your fever, wait 1 full day before leaving the house. Until then, you still place others at risk to get the flu.”

Slide 14 – And... (Booklet Page 3)

Say: “It is important that you rest as much as you can while you are at home. You might also take over-the-counter medications for your symptoms, including to lower your fever. However, you should talk to a pharmacist before taking any over-the-counter medicine. Be sure to drink plenty of water to stay hydrated, and of course, wash your hands with soap and warm water after sneezing, coughing, or blowing your nose.”

Slide 15 – Let’s Talk About Flu Vaccines (Booklet Page 4)

Say: “Now let’s look at page 4 in the booklet and talk about flu vaccines. Flu vaccines are recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older. We often also call the flu vaccine a flu shot, although the flu vaccine can be given in other ways besides just a shot. One flu vaccine comes as a nose spray and is called FluMist. FluMist is currently approved for people ages 2-49 years of age. A flu shot is generally preferred over FluMist. People who are ages 65 and older may be recommended to get a different flu shot than people under age 65. You and your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist will need to decide which flu vaccine is the best for you.”

Ask: “Why would it be important for your *family* to get a flu vaccine if *you* are getting a flu vaccine?”

Note for Presenter: Emphasize in your discussion that your family is out in public with other people who might expose them to the flu.

Say: “**Flu vaccines are the number one way to prevent the flu.** They are safe and effective. Hand washing and coughing or sneezing into the elbow are good health practices at preventing sickness in general, including the flu. However, none work nearly as well at preventing the flu as a flu vaccine.”

Note for Presenter: Emphasize that a flu vaccine is the number one way to prevent the flu because it is one of the questions on the test.

Slide 16 – Who Should Get a Flu Vaccine? (Booklet Page 4)

Say: “Anyone can get the flu every year, so most of us should get the vaccine. There are certain people that especially should get the vaccine because they have a higher risk for getting really sick if they get the flu, which could even lead to a stay in the hospital or possibly death.”

Note for Presenter:

- The flu vaccine can give a person a sore arm and a low fever after injection. They might not feel so great for a day or two after the vaccine. These symptoms are varied and are much more mild and shorter lived than the actual flu. This type of reaction shows that the flu shot is doing what it is supposed to do - training the body to fight the flu. If someone has a sore arm, fever, or just doesn’t feel so great after getting the vaccine, it does not mean that they should not get the vaccine again in the future.

Slide 17 – Who Should Not Get a Flu Vaccine? (Booklet Page 4)

Say: “There is a small group of people who should not get a flu vaccine. This includes people who have a severe allergy to any of the ingredients in the vaccine or anyone who has ever had a very severe reaction to a flu vaccine in the past. People with egg allergies can safely take the vaccine. However, if a person is concerned about having a severe reaction, they can get the vaccine in a doctor’s office (such as an allergist or primary care doctor) where they can be closely monitored afterward.”

DO NOT READ THE FOLLOWING – THIS IS FOR YOUR INFORMATION IF YOU ARE ASKED

Note: Because reactions are rare, do not emphasize these items. This information is supplied to you so that if you are asked what an allergic reaction might look like, you can share this information. However, again, try to stress that these reactions are very rare.

- Signs of serious allergic reaction can include:
 - breathing problems
 - hoarseness or wheezing
 - hives
 - paleness
 - weakness
 - a fast heartbeat
 - dizziness

If they do occur, it is within a few minutes to a few hours after the vaccine. These reactions are more likely to occur among persons with a severe allergy to an ingredient in the vaccine.

- Some people are adamant that they got the flu from the vaccine in the past and it is best not to argue with them. Allow them to have their opinion, but emphasize that it would be highly unusual since the flu vaccine does not have a live virus in it.
- It is important to note that **the flu vaccine absolutely cannot cause an illness**. A person can get the vaccine and still get the flu, but this does not mean that the vaccine gave them the flu.
 - The body takes 2 weeks to build up its defenses after receiving the vaccine. The person could get the flu during those 2 weeks, but will also build immunity for the rest of the flu season.
 - Even after 2 weeks, the vaccine is not totally effective in preventing the flu, but it can still help keep a person out of the hospital or may even save their life, if they actually do get the flu.

Slide 18 - Did You Know? (Booklet Page 4/5)

Say: “Flu vaccines teach your body to fight the flu. They teach your immune system, the part of your body that fights sickness, to recognize and kill the flu. So, hopefully, if a person who has received the flu vaccine comes into contact with the flu virus, their body will know exactly what it is and kill the flu germs, which should keep them from getting sick. Sometimes the vaccine is not enough to keep a person from getting the flu. But, in that case, the vaccine can help the body fight the flu enough to keep someone out of the hospital or keep them from dying. It is important to get a new flu vaccine every year because each year the flu changes. We get a flu vaccine every year so we can teach our body to fight off the new version of the flu. Flu vaccines are typically available in September or early October, right at the beginning of flu season. Get the vaccine early, but also know that it is never too late. The flu vaccine absolutely will not cause an illness.”

Slide 19 – Let’s Review (Booklet Page 5)

Say: “Look at page 5 in your booklet. See the questions under True or False? Circle the correct answer as I read the question.”

Slide 20 – Let’s Review (Booklet Page 5)

Say:

“1. A flu vaccine will protect you from a cold. Circle T if you think this is true or F if you think this is false.

2. A flu vaccine will protect you from some types of the flu. Mark T or F.

3. You should wash your hands with soap and water (or use hand sanitizer) to get rid of germs.

4. The flu can cause fever, chills, cough, and body aches.

5. Newborn babies can get a flu vaccine.”

Slide 21 – Let’s Review (Booklet Page 5)

Say: “Now, let’s correct this little quiz.” (You might ask the group what the correct answer is and why before giving the correct answer.)

1. Is False. If you remember, we discussed how the flu vaccine only protects you from the flu and not from other illnesses. So, if you marked F, you are correct.

2. Is True.

3. Is True.

4. Is True.

5. Is False. Newborn babies are too young to take the flu vaccine. Babies can get a flu vaccine at 6 months old. Until they can get a flu vaccine, they depend on everyone around them to get the vaccine to protect them from the flu.”

Slide 22 – Everyone Has a Story (Booklet Page 6)

Say: “Now let’s take a look at the stories on pages 6 and 7 in your booklet.”

Note for Presenter:

Read the stories below.

Latoya Johnson, RN

VA Hospital, Little Rock, AR

“I take the flu shot in effort to prevent exposure of the flu to the patients I care for, their families and my coworkers. It is very important to maintain a healthy environment for all individuals.”

Sabrina Lewis

Sherwood, AR

“I work with families with young children. I encourage their parents to get them vaccinated, as well as everyone else in the home to help protect their baby brothers and sisters that may be too young to get vaccinated.”

Slide 23 – Everyone Has a Story (Booklet Page 7)

Note for Presenter:

Read the stories below.

Pastor Jameel Wesley

8th Street Missionary Baptist Church

North Little Rock, AR

“It goes without question, my family and I receive the flu vaccine every year. And we have been blessed to be protected from any illness related to the flu virus. I’m a firm believer the flu vaccine is effective in preventing illnesses due to the flu virus. Therefore, I highly recommend annual vaccination to my immediate family, church family, friends and community.”

Tommy Fuquay

Little Rock, AR

“I work in sales and do a lot of traveling. I cannot afford to get sick with the flu, so I get a flu shot every year. I never miss it, and it has sure worked for me.”

Slide 24 – Things to Consider (Booklet Page 8)

Say: “Turn to page 8 in your booklet and think about these things. What does your doctor say about flu vaccines? Who do you trust with your health and why? Only YOU can decide what to do for your family. It is normal to have questions and concerns about flu vaccines. Talk to your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about your concerns. Ask questions.”

Slide 25 – Where Can I Get a Flu Vaccine? (Booklet Page 9)

Say: “Talk to your local doctor, a nurse, pharmacist, or public health clinic to find out more information about where you can get a flu shot. The flu vaccine is quick and easy to get and will help keep you and your family healthy this flu season.”

Note for Presenter: If no arrangements have been made to give flu vaccines to participants at the end of the workshop, it would be helpful for you to research the times and locations of area flu clinics.

Share whatever information you have about locations near you or instruct people to contact their local clinic or public health about where to get flu vaccines. Workshop participants can record information about where they can get a flu vaccine on page 9 in the booklet.

Slide 26 – Thank you!

Say: “We would like to thank the Arkansas Immunization Action Coalition for making this workshop possible.

If applicable, say: “If you would like to get your flu vaccine before you leave, we have staff from _____ clinic or pharmacy set up in the back of the room to give it to you.”

4. After the Workshop

After your workshop, please fill out the Leader's Summary Survey. This survey is available on our website:

<https://www.immunizear.org/vaccine-workshop-toolkits>

Survey:

- Leader's Summary Survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/flu-leader-summary>



5. Addendum

Here is a list of foreseeable topics that may need to be addressed while participants are voicing their questions and fears. Some of these have been illustrated in past workshops and others are adapted from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). If there ever is a question you do not feel comfortable answering, refer the person asking to his/her health care provider.

- What if the vaccine makes me sick?
 - There is often concern the vaccine will actually cause illness. Sometimes these stories are heard through the grapevine or a close relative is believed to have become ill from the flu vaccine. A flu vaccine cannot cause someone to get the flu. The flu vaccine can give a person a sore arm and a low fever after injection. These symptoms are varied and are significantly milder and shorter lived than the actual flu. This type of reaction shows that the flu shot is doing what it is supposed to do- training the body to fight the flu. It does not mean that someone should not get the vaccine. The flu vaccine only protects against the flu and has no effect on other illnesses.
- I will get the flu vaccine if someone close to me gets the flu.
 - At this point it will probably be too late. The body takes 2 weeks to build its defenses after the vaccine. It is likely that, if exposed, the person will become sick well before the vaccine takes effect.
- The vaccine hurts.
 - It may feel like a mild bee sting, and there could be soreness afterwards. However, this is much less severe than the symptoms of the flu that can be very severe, last up to 2 weeks, and cause hospitalization or death.
- It's too late in the flu season.
 - Depending on when the workshop is held, participants may think it's too late and not worth the hassle. Flu season usually peaks around January and February, but this varies and is often unpredictable. It is possible to become sick from the flu at any time in the year. People should still get a flu vaccine, even if after normal "flu shot" season.
- Is the vaccine safe?
 - The flu vaccine has been administered safely for over 50 years and is monitored very closely every year. There has been a wide array of claims, suggesting such effects as the flu vaccine causing fertility problems. This example in particular is unfounded, and it has been well studied many times by many different qualified people. Everyone should be rest assured the flu vaccine is safe.
- Does the flu vaccine protect against the "stomach flu?"
 - No it does not. The term "flu" is actually overused and is not what many would believe to be only an upset stomach and vomiting. This is often caused from bad food or a different illness in the gut. The flu is actually a respiratory sickness (in the lungs). So the illness the flu vaccine prevents and the "stomach flu" are completely unrelated.