

6 Scheduling Tips You Can Use Now to Rock this Flu Season!



While influenza starts circulating sometime between September and February, flu vaccine preparation begins much earlier. Vaccine is often available as early as early August. Therefore, preparing your practice schedule as early as possible will help you organize your office and [educate your staff](#) prior to the tsunami of vaccine-only visits.

The CDC recommends all people 6 months and older be vaccinated against seasonal flu. ¹

Scheduling these many patients can be a daunting task for many physicians' offices. Unfortunately, flu season often coincides with the beginning of the school year and increased sick child visits. Here are six scheduling tips to help your team rock it this flu season:

- 1. Begin advertising flu vaccine as soon as it is available.** When you are ready to start administering flu vaccine, you can make your patients aware by posting signs in the waiting areas and exam rooms. Try sending out promotional email or texts. Don't forget to post updates on your Web and social media sites!
- 2. Prepare early.** Set up a separate nurse-only or flu-shot schedule as soon as you decide when to start administering flu vaccine. Consequently, these appointments should be shorter in length and set up for when you either have extra staff or on traditionally slower days.
- 3. Schedule plenty of days for after school appointments.** A separate schedule allows you to have sufficient staff and to keep track of vaccine supply. Using a separate appointment type such as "flu shot", allows you to continually track how many patients still need appointments. This can make it easier for patients and families to get immunized quickly and efficiently.
- 4. Consider setting up after hours or Saturday flu shot clinic days.** This can allow a practice to vaccinate a much larger group of patients more efficiently and prior to the start of influenza virus circulation. For an example of a successful flu clinic don't miss this case example from the 2015 National Adult & Influenza Immunization Summit [Immunization Champion – Pittsburgh Primary Care Practice](#).
- 5. Notify the team when vaccine arrives and review appointment procedures.** Advise anyone who will have contact with patients that flu vaccine is in stock. This includes physicians, nurses and front office staff! Encourage the whole team to offer vaccine to those in the office or schedule appointments for those who call.
- 6. Offer vaccine to family members.** Coach the whole team to offer vaccine to family members of patients that may be in the office. "Never missing an opportunity" to vaccinate should be the office mantra at all times!

More Flu Resources:

- [1. cdc.gov/flu](http://cdc.gov/flu)
- [2. flu.gov](http://flu.gov)
- [3. http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season-2016-2017.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season-2016-2017.htm)

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Manny Oliverrez, CPC, is a 20-year healthcare veteran and the CEO and co-founder of Capture Billing, a medical billing services company located outside of Washington, D.C. He teaches the nation's physicians, administrators, and medical practices how to maximize billing and revenue cycle management processes. Manny also frequently posts articles and videos on his [award-winning healthcare blog](#). For more information on Manny and his company, please visit [his website](#), or call (703)327-1800. And if you're on [LinkedIn](#), please look for him there too. **READ MORE**

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