While every flu season is different, the challenge of informing, educating, and vaccinating appropriate patients is perennial. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that during the 2016-2017 flu season, only approximately 43% of adults 18 years of age and older were vaccinated against the flu, which is well below the rates needed to reach the Healthy People 2020 goals.1,2 By having answers to these frequently asked questions about flu vaccination, you will be prepared to deliver effective vaccine information to your appropriate patients this flu season.

**Is the flu vaccine right for me?**
According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the flu vaccine is recommended every year to everyone 6 months of age and older who does not have a contraindication to the vaccine.1

**Do I really need a flu vaccine every year?**
Yes. The body’s immune response from vaccination declines over time, so an annual vaccine is needed. Also, because the flu viruses are constantly changing, the formulation of the flu vaccine is reviewed each year and is sometimes updated to keep up with changing flu viruses.3

**Can the flu vaccine give me the flu?**
The flu vaccines that are given as a shot cannot cause flu illness.4

**What are the most common side effects of the flu vaccine?**
The most common side effects in adults are soreness, redness, or swelling at the injection site, headache, fever, nausea, and muscle aches usually lasting only a few days.4

Having answers to questions regarding flu vaccination is a great way to help guide your patients toward immunization. But the conversation doesn’t have to stop there. Any discussion about the flu vaccine is an opportunity to increase awareness on the benefits of commonly overlooked vaccinations that are also recommended for your patients.

**References:**