

DISCUSSING VACCINATION WITH PATIENTS LIVING WITH ASTHMA OR COPD

PHARMACISTS SHOULD HIGHLIGHT THE FOLLOWING MESSAGES TO PATIENTS WITH ASTHMA OR COPD

Individuals with asthma or COPD are at higher risk of severe complications and death from vaccine-preventable respiratory diseases such as flu, or pneumococcal pneumonia due to their narrowed, mucus-filled airways.

INFLUENZA VACCINATION

- Vaccine-preventable diseases such as flu may lead to damage of the airways that leads to disease progression, thus increasing patients' susceptibility to contracting illnesses.
- Influenza can also worsen the inflammation in the airways and lungs, and trigger asthma attacks or aggravate asthma symptoms.
- Non-vaccination increases the risk of developing secondary infections that may lead to permanent lung damage, pneumonia, worsening of the pre-existing condition, and hospitalisation.
- People living with asthma should be vaccinated against the flu every year since they are twice as likely to develop complications from influenza infections such as pneumonia and twice as likely to be hospitalised due to severe influenza.

OTHER VACCINES

- Anti-pneumococcal vaccination reduces the chances of COPD exacerbations.
- Tdap vaccination is recommended because diphtheria is a respiratory infection that may block the airways, decreasing an individual's ability to swallow or breathe properly. In patients with CRDs, this could potentially be deadly. Also, pertussis (whooping cough) can produce symptoms such as a running nose and cough that can trigger exacerbations of asthma or COPD.