



INFLUENZA AND THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT

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NCFH

National Center for Farmworker Health, Inc.

READER'S NOTE:

This toolkit is part of a broader COVID-19 Messaging Social Media Toolkit. For more best practices on posting on social media and developing a social media campaign please refer [here](#).

INTRODUCTION

Whether working with livestock or crops, farmworkers may be more vulnerable than the general population to human influenza outbreaks because of living conditions, lack of access to health services, and potential language barriers. (1)

Despite a pandemic, millions of farmworkers have remained on the job, always on the front lines of planting, harvesting, selling, and delivering food for us. That is why it is important for organizations that serve the farmworker community to increase awareness and understanding of the influenza vaccine among farmworkers living and working in the U.S., especially as we fight both influenza and COVID-19.

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide information and resources to amplify your organization's social media messaging about the influenza season during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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I. INFLUENZA VS COVID-19

The following section is for your reference on general information about flu and COVID-19 that can help your organization's social media messaging campaign. The information provides context for symptoms, preventive measures, and mixing of the vaccines.

Basics of Flu and COVID-19

The flu and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses caused by different viruses. (2) The flu is caused by an infection of one of many influenza viruses that spread annually among people and most commonly peaks in February and continues into May in the U.S. (3) In contrast, COVID-19 is caused by a coronavirus infection, and it is not yet known if there are seasonal trends.

Both the flu and COVID-19 can spread from person-to-person, specifically through inhalation of particles containing the virus, or touching a surface that has the virus on it and then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes. (4)

Symptoms

COVID-19 symptoms might be confused with the flu. If a person has COVID-19, it could take them longer to experience symptoms than if they have flu. Typically, flu symptoms appear anywhere from 1 to 4 days after infection. For COVID-19, symptoms can appear 2 to 14 days after infection. (5)

Symptoms for both the flu and COVID-19 include:



- **Cough**
- **Shortness of breath**
- **Fever or feeling feverish/having chills**



- **Fatigue**
- **Sore Throat**
- **Runny or stuffy nose**



- **Body aches**
- **Vomiting**
- **Diarrhea**

Something to note: Change in or loss of taste or smell is more frequent with COVID-19.

Symptoms for each virus can be similar, therefore testing to tell which virus is causing an illness is very important. (6)



Preventive Measures

COVID-19 & Influenza Vaccines

A yearly flu vaccine is the most important preventive measure to protect against the flu.

It is important to emphasize in your social media messaging that the flu vaccine is not a replacement for the COVID-19 vaccine. Flu vaccines reduce the risk of becoming sick, hospitalized, or dying from influenza; however, the flu vaccines do not protect against COVID-19, only COVID-19 vaccines can protect against severe illness, hospitalization, and death from COVID-19. (7) The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has deemed it safe for people to get the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccines at the same time.

	Influenza Vaccine (8)	U.S. COVID-19 General Vaccine (9)	U.S. COVID-19 Booster Vaccine (10)
Who is Eligible?	6 months and older	Pfizer: 5+ years old Moderna/J&J: 18+ years old	Pfizer: 16+ years old Moderna/J&J: 18+ years old
Strains They Protect Against	Four influenza viruses: A, B, C, and D	Effective against the SARS-CoV-2 virus	
Number of Shots	Require one shot	Pfizer/Moderna: Require two shots (Pfizer given 3 weeks apart; Moderna given 4 weeks apart) J&J: Require one shot	Require one shot (Pfizer/Moderna given 5 months after the last dose in their primary series; J&J given 2 months after the last dose in their primary series)
Side Effects	Soreness, redness, and tenderness on the arm where you got the shot. Low-grade fever, headache, and muscle aches.	Pain, redness, and swelling on the arm where you got the shot. Tiredness, headache, muscle pain, chills, fever, and nausea	Similar symptoms as the U.S. COVID-19 general vaccines

Preventive Measures

When an essential worker is vaccinated against the flu and COVID-19, they protect themselves, their families, co-workers, and their communities. However, historically we have seen lower flu vaccination numbers from BIPOC communities. (11) Latinos have been among the most hesitant to get the flu vaccine, whether it's from barriers to accessing health care, to differing cultural perceptions about vaccines. (12) That is why it's also important to highlight feasible preventive measure to protect against the flu during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The CDC suggests the following preventive measures to protect against the flu: (13)

- Social distancing, preferably staying 6 feet away from others
 - Sometimes depending on their work (such as in packing houses) this is not feasible so it's good to emphasize that wearing a mask is important if they cannot physically distance
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated spaces if sick
 - Emphasizing that it's not safe to go to the bailes or other crowded public venues if they are feeling sick
- Washing hands often
 - Suggesting antibacterial gel as an alternative if workers do not have access to soap and water
- Cover coughs and sneezes
 - Emphasize the importance of coughing and sneezing into a tissue or the inside of the elbow (rather than one's hands) to avoid spreading germs



COMMON QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT FLU AND COVID-19

CAN YOU GET FLU AND COVID AT THE SAME TIME?

Yes, it is possible to have flu and COVID-19 at the same time.

BECAUSE SYMPTOMS OF FLU AND COVID-19 ARE SIMILAR, HOW CAN ONE KNOW IF THEY HAVE FLU OR COVID-19?

Testing for COVID-19 or flu can help confirm whether one has one virus or the other. (14)

WILL A FLU VACCINE PROTECT AGAINST COVID-19?

No, flu vaccines do not protect against COVID-19. Flu vaccines reduce the risk of flu illness. Likewise, the COVID-19 vaccine best protects against severe illness, hospitalizations, and death from COVID-19.

DO I NEED A FLU VACCINE IF I WEAR A MASK AND PRACTICE PHYSICAL DISTANCING?

Yes. Wearing a mask and physical distancing can help protect oneself and others from respiratory viruses, like flu and the virus that causes COVID-19. However, the best way to reduce the risk of flu illness and its potentially serious complications is to get a flu vaccine each year.

IS IT SAFE TO GET A COVID-19 VACCINE AND A FLU VACCINE AT THE SAME TIME?

Yes, it is safe to receive both vaccines at the same time.

CAN CHILDREN GET A COVID-19 VACCINE AND A FLU VACCINE DURING THE SAME VISIT?

Yes, children ages 5 years and older who are eligible for COVID-19 vaccination can get a COVID-19 vaccine and a flu vaccine at the same visit. However, each injection is administered at a different injection site.



II. DEVELOPING A SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Social media is an effective way to reach a mobile audience, such as farmworkers—specifically migrant and seasonal workers. Using social media allows you to reach, engage, and inform your target audience regardless of where they are.

Very limited data is available regarding farmworker media consumption, but the limited data we do have found that 95% of farmworkers reported having access to sources of digital information (15): 96% of farmworkers had a cellphone with text messaging capabilities, 92% of farmworkers had access to a cell phone with internet access, 41% reported having a computer, and 26% had a tablet. Indigenous language speakers had less access to the internet and digital information sources, but 94% of Indigenous language speakers did have a cell phone with text capabilities, emphasizing the importance of text-based communications for reaching diverse farmworker audiences.

Intended Audience

For this social media campaign, we will be focusing on farmworkers as our primary audience.

- We know that the largest demographic segment of farmworkers is males from Mexico and Central American countries between the ages of 20-44 years old.
- Among those employed in crop production, 68% of workers were foreign-born, predominantly male (69%) and more than half were under the age of 44 (58%). (16)
- Other specific audiences of focus include female farmworkers, H-2A guest workers, and Indigenous farmworkers.
- Farmworkers prefer information in Spanish, with 64% of crop workers reporting they are most comfortable conversing in Spanish.

Social Media Platforms

It is important to identify what social media platforms your audience utilizes to plan out your social media campaign. Many farmworkers rely on Facebook for health information and WhatsApp for communication so we will focus our sample social media posts to these two platforms.



KEY MESSAGES

Conveying the latest public health information and providing bite-sized summaries for your audience is key. Some sample key social media messaging points your organization should highlight about influenza during the COVID-19 pandemic include:



- 1** How flu and COVID are transmitted in similar ways.
- 2** Preventive measures: wash hands frequently, keep a distance (at least 6 feet/2 meters), get the flu vaccine when possible.
- 3** The COVID vaccine will not protect from the flu.
- 4** The flu vaccine will not protect from COVID.
- 5** The importance of protecting those most at risk, especially the elderly, young children, and pregnant women from the flu.



III. SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

There are no hard and fast rules to building a social media campaign. However, there are a few key components to always include: key messages, an attention-grabbing image, hashtags, and a call to action.

Key Social Media Considerations

- Multilingual Posts
 - Recently, critical data collected through the efforts of NCFH and JBS International on farmworkers' experiences during COVID-19 have given insights into what languages workers predominately communicate in. Among farmworkers surveyed by NCFH and JBS International in the fall of 2021, only 16% of the 1,094 farmworkers surveyed reported speaking English as a primary language (17), meaning not all information can be in English if your audience is not going to be able to understand it. That is why it is important to have bilingual and multilingual posts.
 - Consider posting separate posts when posting in different languages so the information gets across, for smaller captions and short phrases then include translations into one post.
- Visuals
 - When posting on social platforms, be sure that each post includes a visual element of some kind. Visuals are high performers on social media, so be sure to include an eye-catching, culturally appropriate, colorful image or graphic with each post that conveys your message. With this social media campaign an image of a farmworker receiving his flu vaccine will get more engagement versus a text heavy post telling farmworkers to get their flu vaccine.
- Keep it Short
 - If you are linking to a website or resource, you do not need to post a detailed paragraph of the link but a sentence or two should be fine. Your social media post should merely be a hook to draw in the audience to the more detailed source.
- Cross-posting
 - Cross-posting is the practice of posting the same social media content across multiple social media platforms. You can publish your WhatsApp Status updates to other social media platforms specifically Facebook and Instagram stories where the posting format is similar.





BASIC STRUCTURES OF A FACEBOOK POST

If you can, use social media posts with a visual asset (graphic, photo, video, etc.) since they receive more engagements than text-only posts.

Sample Message Structure #1:

[Hook – 1 sentence]

Are you having trouble finding medical care and resources?

[Descriptor – 1 sentence]

NCFH is offering location services and financial aid help to farmworkers looking for medical help!

[Call to Action – 1 sentence]

Call 1 (800) 377 – 9968 to speak with someone who can help you!

Ensure that if you do exceed the 2-3 sentence structure that you space out your hook/descriptor/call to action to emphasize each. Avoid a block of text.

Sample Message Structure #2:

[Descriptor - 1 sentence] Does a fever mean I have the flu or COVID?

[Call to Action] Learn more in this article about the differences between identifying COVID and the flu:
<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm>

In some cases, your Descriptor and Call to Action can be combined.



Facebook

SAMPLE FACEBOOK POSTS



Post #1

Con el trabajo, puede ser difícil hacer citas para varias vacunas. ¡Por eso es importante saber que puedes vacunarte contra la gripe al mismo tiempo que tu vacuna o refuerzo contra COVID-19!

Obtén más información sobre la vacuna contra la gripe aquí: bit.ly/flushotquestions

With work, it can be difficult to schedule multiple vaccine shots. Which is why it's important to know that you can get your flu vaccine at the same time as your COVID-19 shot or booster!

Learn more about the flu vaccine here: bit.ly/flushotquestions



Facebook

Post #2

La mejor manera de reducir el riesgo de contraer la gripe es vacunarse cada año, pero los mejores hábitos de salud durante la pandemia de COVID-19 incluyen:

- Evita el contacto cercano con personas enfermas dentro de tu hogar, si es posible, de lo contrario, usa una máscara para evitar la propagación
- Cúbrete la boca y la nariz al toser o estornudar, especialmente en los autobuses de trabajo llenos de gente

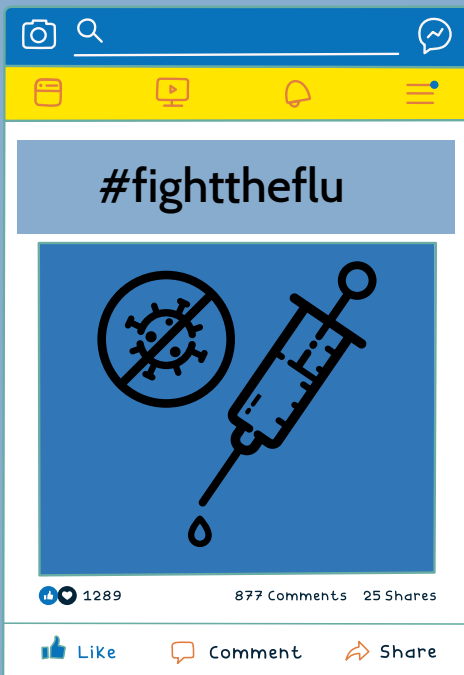
Obtén más información sobre cómo mantenerte a salvo esta temporada de gripe aquí: bit.ly/flushotquestions

The single best way to reduce the risk of the flu is to get vaccinated each year, but good health habits during the COVID-19 pandemic include:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick inside your home, if possible, otherwise wear a mask to prevent a spread
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, especially in crowded labor buses

Learn more about how to stay safe this flu season here: bit.ly/flushotquestions

Post #3



Es importante saber que puedes recibir la vacuna contra la gripe y la vacuna contra el COVID-19 al mismo tiempo.

También es importante saber que la vacuna contra el COVID-19 solo ayuda a protegerte contra el COVID-19, así que asegúrate de vacunarte contra la gripe también.

It's important to know you could get your flu vaccine and your COVID-19 vaccine at the same time.

It's also important to know that the COVID-19 vaccine only helps protect from COVID-19 so make sure to get your flu shot as well.



WhatsApp

Learn to use WhatsApp status to promote digital materials and health information. WhatsApp Status is a status update that disappears after 24 hours of you uploading it (like Instagram stories). (18) You can share photos, videos, text, links, GIFs, and even Facebook livestream links.

BASIC STRUCTURE OF A WHATSAPP MESSAGE

Sample Message Structure:

[Message] Prevent losing days off work! Get the flu vaccine now.

[Call to Action] Text us at +1 737 414-5121 if you have any questions!

[Graphic] : (Background) A state map with a red search arrow emblazoned with a white medical cross above it. (Foreground) Your org logo in the corner and a semi-opaque banner across the width that reads “Go to bit.ly/vaxfinder today!”]



- Links and photos are KEY, so we advise to stick to 1-2 short sentences.
- To avoid looking like spam, ensure that your message comes with a graphic with your logo and your call to action within.



WhatsApp

SAMPLE WHATSAPP MESSAGES

Message #1

¿La fiebre significa que tienes gripe o COVID? Obtén más información sobre las diferencias entre el COVID y la gripe aquí. Envía un mensaje de texto a Una Voz para la Salud al +1 737 414-5121 si necesitas ayuda para encontrar un médico cercano a ti.

4:00 PM ✓

Does a fever mean you have the flu or COVID? Learn more about the differences between identifying COVID and the flu here. Send a text message to Call for Health at +1 737 414-5121 if you need assistance finding a doctor near you!

4:03 PM ✓

Gracias! // Thank you!

8:03 PM



WhatsApp

FLU SEASON AHEAD



PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS.
GET YOUR FLU SHOT.

Message #2

La vacuna es gratuita, segura y sigue siendo la mejor protección contra la gripe. Llámanos para mas información sobre la vacuna y donde encontrar sitios para vacunarte!

6:50 PM ✓✓

The vaccine is free, safe, and remains the best protection against the flu. Call us for more information about the vaccine and where to find sites to get vaccinated!

7:02 PM ✓✓



WhatsApp

Aunque puedes recibirlas al mismo tiempo, es importante saber que la vacuna contra el COVID-19 solo protege contra el COVID-19 y las vacunas contra la influenza solo protegen contra la influenza. Llámanos si necesitas ayuda encontrar sitios para vacunarte.

3:50 PM ✓✓

Message #3

Even though you can get them at the same time, it's important to know that the COVID-19 vaccine only protects from COVID-19 and the flu vaccines only protects from the flu. Call us if you need assistance finding sites to get vaccinated.

3:53 PM ✓✓

Claro que si! // of course!

7:00 PM

HASHTAGS TO USE



Hashtags are essential in keeping with online conversations, specifically in making sure your key messages are reaching your audience. Hashtags help categorize your content that then lets people find your content and interact with it.

Hashtags associated with flu season include:

#FIGHTFLU
#COMBATELAINFLUENZA
#FLU
#INFLUENZA
#VACCINATION
#SALUDPÚBLICA

We recommend that you use the search function of the respective social media platforms to find out what hashtags are trending that day as these can boost your posts. For flu season messaging we advise you use hashtags that are used by public health departments and other health agencies.

CALL TO ACTION



It is recommended that the last component of your social media messages be a call to action. What do you want the reader to do after they have read your message? There needs to be something the reader can engage within the post. General call to action phrases includes: “give us your comment, like our page, and/or share this post”. Public health-focused call to action phrases may include “Find out where to get vaccinated; Contact us for more information”.

For a flu vaccine campaign, it is important to direct farmworkers to resources closest to them that can connect them with the flu vaccine. For example: “If you don’t have a health care professional you regularly see, you can find flu vaccines at many places, including health departments and pharmacies.” Another alternative and a great call to action is to include your organization’s services at the end of a social media post especially if you want farmworkers to connect with you directly.

Additionally, you can also include NCFH’s [Call for Health/Una Voz para la Salud](#) program. Call for Health/Una Voz para la Salud works to connect farmworkers directly with health services and resources closest to where they work or live. This service is free to farmworkers and their families, y se habla español!



CONTENT CALENDAR

Running a social media account is almost always about timing. That is why we suggest having a calendar for you to use when planning upcoming content output, otherwise known as a content calendar. Content calendars are important because they help you organize your messages so you can focus on growing your online engagement.

You know your audience better than we do, so consider the following suggestions and adapt them to suit the needs of your organization:

- Schedule your posts for the times which you believe will get the most visibility with your audience.
 - Farmworkers work long hours and either check their social media apps early in the morning, late in the evening, or during their days off (typically Sundays); consider posting around 6-7am or 6-8pm, and anytime during the day on the weekends, the times when they are either heading to work, coming back from the fields, or enjoying their weekend.
- Some social media platforms (such as Facebook and Twitter Desktop) allow for scheduling posts ahead of time. Otherwise, we suggest making use of programs such as Hootsuite to connect your accounts and schedule posts. You can use the free version to schedule and manage accounts and consider upgrading to premium if you think those advanced tools will better suit your needs.
- Be intentional with your posting. Post frequently without overwhelming your audience. You can organize posts by them for a given week to focus on a specific aspect of a topic or conversation. For example, you can post 3 times in a week with each time highlighting a preventive measure to prevent the flu.

You can access this free [Social Media Content Calendar template](#) for your organization to download and use. This template can be downloaded and modified to fit your organization's communications capacity.



CONTENT CREATION RESOURCES

The following are resources you can access for free to help you as you create content for this flu season.

COVID-19 INTEGRATED COUNTY VIEW

The CDC has a visualization data tool that provides an integrated, county view of key data for monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. It allows for the exploration of standardized data across the country, this includes cases and vaccination rates. This tool can help you look and reference the numbers of infection and vaccination rates where you provide services.

COVID-19 AND THE FLU

The Get the Facts campaign by the National Resource Center for Refugees, Immigrants, and Migrants (NRC-RIM) is based on CDC guidance, offering facts about COVID-19 and flu vaccines in a simple and memorable way that counters common misconceptions. These facts address cost, ingredients, side effects, eligibility, and more. Each set of materials includes translations in more than 30 languages as well as the ability for you to customize the logo, URL, photo, and more.

COVID-19 PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN

Shareable campaigns, social media posts, and resources by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to increase awareness of the COVID-19 and flu vaccines and reinforce basic prevention measures. (also in [Spanish](#))

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR FARMWORKERS

NCFH's multimedia educational resources in multiple languages address COVID-19 prevention, control, vaccination, and preventative measures against the flu.

Bonus! Refer to our [COVID-19 Messaging Social Media Toolkit](#) for more best practices to developing a social media campaign and resources for developing social media.

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