PAPER CLIP—GAP INFLUENZA (FLU) VACCINATION

Description:
Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause a mild to severe illness. Serious outcomes of flu infections can result in hospitalization or death. Some people, such as older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions are at high risk for serious flu complications. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting vaccinated each year.

Possible Cause:
Most experts believe that flu viruses spread by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might also get flu by touching a surface or object that has the flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes or possibly their nose.

Diagnostic Tests:
Your health care provider may diagnose you with the flu based on your symptoms and their clinical judgment, or they may choose to use an influenza diagnostic test.

Conversation with Member:

- **General opening:** “How have you been feeling lately? Have you had a chance to get your flu shot this year?”
- **Offer information:** “Can we take a few minutes to talk about the flu?”
- **Get more specific:** “You probably know that the best way to prevent getting the flu this season is to get a vaccination. Do you have any barriers in getting your flu shot each year?”
- **Lifestyle impacts:** “If you get sick with flu symptoms, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to get medical care. Symptoms of the flu include: coughing, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, fatigue and a fever.”
- **Medical treatment:** “Most people with the flu have mild illness and do not need medical care or antiviral drugs. However, if you have symptoms of the flu and are in a high risk group, are very sick or worried about your illness, contact your health care provider. The best way to manage the flu is to prevent it with a vaccination.”
- **Review the member’s plan of action:** “To prevent yourself from getting the flu, you should get vaccinated each year between the months of September to October. Talk with your provider about whether or not you are at high risk for serious complications. If you are ill or have questions, contact your provider.”
- **National Standard:** The member gets a flu shot annually prior to flu season, and the Care Coordinator discusses this, even if the member got the vaccination as the results are reported by members’ recollection (make it memorable).

References:

- CDC: Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Resources for Health Professionals