

# Integrating COPD Risk Screenings during Flu Clinics



COPD, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, is a progressive disease that makes it hard to breathe. Some of the symptoms of COPD are similar to the symptoms of other diseases and conditions.

COPD may cause symptoms like an ongoing cough – with or without mucus/phlegm – shortness of breath and fatigue.

In order to differentiate symptoms, it is important to be screened for COPD risk. To identify the symptoms of COPD versus the flu and determine COPD risk, individuals may want to ask their healthcare professional or person hosting the flu clinic for the COPD Population Screener™ at their annual flu shot.

## COPD and the Flu

It is important for people who have COPD to get the flu shot as they have an increased risk for serious complications associated with the flu. However, as many as half of the 24 million Americans who may be living with COPD don't even know they have it. As such, a yearly flu vaccination appointment can also be an opportune time to get screened to determine one's risk for COPD.

When an individual has COPD, they are more likely to get lung infections like the flu. This happens more often because with COPD, the airways become narrower with an increase in mucus production therefore allowing less air to travel in and out of the lungs. This can lead to exacerbations with flare-ups of symptoms.

## COPD Screening

Because COPD is a largely unrecognized disease, the **DRIVE4COPD** campaign offers a brief five-question screener to help people identify their risk for COPD. This validated COPD Population Screener™ can be accessed at **DRIVE4COPD.ORG**. Those who score at risk for COPD are encouraged to begin a dialogue with their healthcare professional.

## Suggestions on how to incorporate the brief five-question screener into your flu immunization program:

- **While waiting on line:** a volunteer can distribute the screener with a pen and clipboard at the beginning of the line; the flu shot administrator can then review the results
- **While filling out paper work:** office staff can add in the screener to the information they are filling out
- **As a take home:** volunteers can hand out the screener or brochure to people as they depart and encourage them to read and/or share the material with others
- **Online:** if you are sending out an email to publicize your flu clinic or follow up communications after they get their flu shot you can incorporate the **DRIVE4COPD.ORG** address in the email where they can click to take the screener