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Flu can be serious. Annual flu vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and your loved ones. [Learn more](#)

#FIGHTFLU National Foundation for Infectious Diseases

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What Every Adult Should Know About Influenza (Flu)

Keep yourself and your family protected this season

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By National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (Paid Content)

Influenza (flu) is a contagious viral infection that can cause mild to severe symptoms and serious complications, including hospitalization and death, even in healthy children and adults. In the US, the current flu season is shaping up to be particularly bad. The number of positive flu tests and hospitalizations is the highest in more than a decade. Anyone can get sick with flu. However, certain individuals, including **adults age 65+ and those with certain chronic health conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, chronic kidney disease, and diabetes are at greater risk** of developing serious flu-related complications. During the current US respiratory season, hospitalization rates are highest among adults age 65 years and older.

FIRST, THE BAD NEWS

Immune systems weaken as people age, putting older adults at greater risk of serious flu-related complications, including pneumonia, hospitalization, and even death.¹ Older adults are more likely to have other chronic health conditions that can increase their risk of flu-related complications.² In recent years, it is estimated that 20-35% of seasonal flu-related deaths and 50-70% of flu-related hospitalizations occurred in adults age 65 years and older.² In addition, flu increases the risk of heart attack by 3.5 times and stroke by 2-3 times in the first 2 weeks of infection for those age 65 years and older. And the risk remains elevated for several months.⁴

NOW, THE GOOD NEWS

Specific flu vaccines are now preferentially recommended for adults age 65+ to help boost immune response, including high dose, recombinant, and adjuvanted flu vaccines.³

There are also 3 key steps you can take to help #FightFlu:

1. Get vaccinated against flu every year (everyone age 6 months and older)
2. Practice healthy habits to stop the spread of germs - wash your hands, cover your coughs and sneezes, and stay home if you are sick
3. If you have flu symptoms, call a healthcare professional as soon as possible and take flu antivirals if prescribed

And if you know that flu is circulating in your community, wear a mask when you are indoors with larger groups of people.

Help keep yourself, your loved ones, and your community protected. Get vaccinated every year to help fight flu.

[To learn more, visit \[www.nfid.org/flu\]\(http://www.nfid.org/flu\)](#)

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [New Facts About Seasonal Flu Vaccine](#). Accessed November 7, 2022.

2 National Institutes of Health. [Flu and Older Adults](#). Accessed November 10, 2022.

3 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Flu & People 65 Years and Older](#). Accessed November 10, 2022.

4 Smeeth L, Thomas SL, Hall AJ, Hubbard R, Farrington B, Valencia P. Risk of myocardial infarction and stroke after acute infection or vaccination. *The New England Journal of Medicine*. 2004;351(25):2611-2618. doi:10.1056/NEJMoa041747

5 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [Flu & People 65 Years and Older](#). Accessed November 10, 2022.

About NFID

Founded in 1973, the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to educating and engaging the public, communities, and healthcare professionals about infectious diseases across the lifespan.

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