

Flu + You

Protect. Learn. Understand. Safeguard.
Educating older adults about influenza and prevention
From the National Council on Aging and Sanofi Pasteur



Older Adults Are at Greater Risk for Influenza

Influenza Is a Serious and Potentially Life-Threatening Disease, Especially for Older Adults

- Influenza, often called the flu, is a common respiratory infection caused by several related viruses.
- Influenza is easily passed from person to person through coughing and sneezing or through contact with fluids from an infected person's mouth or nose.
- Symptoms of influenza often include high fever, headache, tiredness, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and body aches.
- No matter how healthy or youthful we feel or appear, as we age, our immune system weakens and our ability to fight illness decreases.
 - As a result, older adults are more vulnerable to influenza and its related complications, making influenza vaccination extremely important.
- Each year in the United States more than nine out of 10 flu-related deaths and more than six out of 10 flu-related hospital stays occur in people over the age of 65.

Vaccination Is Safe and Effective and the Best Way to Help Protect against Influenza

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have expanded their recommendations for annual influenza vaccination to include everyone 6 months of age and older.
 - For adults over the age of 65 it is **still** critically important to get an influenza vaccine each and every year.
 - Despite these recommendations, immunization rates among adults 65 and older are still far below public health goals.
- Receiving an influenza vaccination each and every year is important to help protect yourself, as well as those around you, such as family members and friends.

There Are Vaccination Options Made Specifically for Adults 65 Years of Age and Older

- Adults aged 65 and older have two vaccine options available — the traditional flu shot, as well as a higher dose flu vaccine designed specifically to address the age-related decline of the immune system.
 - The higher dose vaccine triggers the body to produce more antibodies against the flu virus than would be produced by the traditional flu shot.
- Both vaccine options are covered by Medicare Part B with no copay.

Talk to your health care provider today about the dangers of the flu, the benefits of vaccination and the best vaccine option to meet the needs of your age group. To learn more, visit www.ncoa.org/Flu.