

Don't Let Influenza Interrupt Healthy Aging

Influenza and influenza-related complications can be life-changing or life-threatening for adults 65 yr+.

According to the **World Health Organization**, influenza vaccination is the 3rd priority intervention to achieve healthy aging after the prevention of falls and the promotion of physical activity.

There is an increased risk of flu-related complications as we get older

Immunosenescence is the natural decline of our body's immune system as we age, which increases our risk of contracting infections like the flu and may reduce our response to vaccines.

Compared with younger adults, adults 65 years and older have a higher prevalence of chronic medical conditions, many of which are associated with increased risk of flu-related complications and severe outcomes.

Hospitalization, Loss Of Independence, and Frailty

Influenza can take away independent living from older adults. A single hospitalization (due to flu or in general) can have a devastating impact on an older adult's ability to live independently.

Studies have found that as many as 1/3 of older adults leave hospitals with a significant loss of ability to carry out their activities of daily living, such as bathing, dressing or eating.

Influenza is the 3rd leading cause of catastrophic disability*, only behind congestive heart failure and stroke.

* Catastrophic disability is defined as the loss of independence in three or more basic activities of daily living (e.g. eating, dressing, and bathing).

Are you at greater risk?

People with medical conditions including asthma, chronic lung disease, diabetes, and heart disease are considered to be at higher risk for developing flu-related complications.

The flu has the ability to worsen chronic conditions; it is a known trigger for heart attacks and strokes in people with existing heart disease.

The good news is the flu vaccine may reduce the severity of infections and can prevent 40% of hospitalizations. There are now flu vaccines designed specifically for seniors, which are more effective in those over 65 than the standard dose flu vaccine. Ask your doctor about the flu vaccine that is recommended for you.

More information on flu vaccines for seniors:

Immunisation Canada

Canadian Immunization Guide Chapter on Influenza and Statement on Seasonal Influenza Vaccine for 2022–2023

www.activeagingcanada.ca

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