

Influenza and Older Adults — Your Chronic Condition Puts You at Greater Risk

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

Influenza, together with all causes of pneumonia, is the 7th leading cause of death in Canada, and is the leading cause of death amongst diseases prevented by vaccines.

Flu-Related Hospitalizations And Deaths

- ☆ On average, adults 65 years and older account for 70% of flu-related hospitalizations and 90% of flu-related deaths.
- ☆ 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.

Heart and lung conditions and the Flu put you at greater risk

Older Canadians often live with one or two chronic conditions. In adults 65 years and older, the risk of death associated with the flu was:

- ☆ 5X GREATER among those with chronic heart disease
- ☆ 12X GREATER among those with chronic lung disease
- ☆ 20X GREATER among those with BOTH chronic heart and lung conditions.

What Is The Connection Between Flu and Heart Attacks?

A recent Canadian study of adults found that:

- ☆ The risk of heart attack was 6X HIGHER within 7 days of a flu diagnosis.

Inflammation and fever associated with the flu can make your body work harder, putting extra strain on your heart. That's why people with heart disease are far more likely to suffer from severe influenza that can lead to complications such as pneumonia and serious cardiac events.

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Immunisation Canada

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

www.activeagingcanada.ca

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But, in a separate study in adults with varying degrees of cardiovascular risk:

- ☆ Flu vaccination was associated with a 36% lower risk of major cardiovascular events including cardiovascular death, heart attack and heart failure.

Vaccines: Less Than 100% May Be Better Than 0%

Even when there is a less than ideal match or lower effectiveness against one virus, it is important to be aware that those who get the flu vaccine:

- ☆ are still more likely to be protected against the flu
- ☆ are protected against the other flu strains that are contained in the vaccine
- ☆ may have a milder illness even if they do get the flu.

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More information on flu vaccines for seniors:

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