

2018–2019 Flu Season

What You Should Know

During your annual visit, ask your doctor what vaccines you need to stay healthy.

Nine Ways to Boost Your Immune System

Myth



You can get the flu from the flu shot.

Fact



The vaccine is made from a dead virus, so it cannot give you the flu.

Vaccine Facts

- It is estimated that 70-85% of flu-related deaths in the US have occurred among people 65 years and older.
- Antibiotics will not help you get better if you have the flu. Antivirals may help. Ask your doctor for more information.

This past flu season was the worst in the last **6 years.**



It takes about **two weeks** after vaccination for your body to develop protection against the flu.



Last flu season, the highest hospitalization rate was among people **65 years and older.**



This past year was the **first year** that all 48 continental US states had full flu outbreaks at the same time.



People with chronic illnesses, such as **diabetes and heart disease, are at a higher risk of getting the flu and pneumonia.**



1

Taking care of yourself is the best way to help your immune system stay strong. Eat right, stay active, and get enough sleep.

2

Eat a well-rounded diet. Turn half your plate to fruits and vegetables and have a lean protein and whole grains as well.

3

Drink alcohol in moderation, if at all.

4

Get your annual flu shot and other vaccinations as recommended by your doctor.

5

Fit in your recommended activity (around 20 minutes a day). Speak with your doctor about your recommended activity level.

6

If you smoke cigarettes, consider quitting. Smoking decreases your ability to fight off infections.

7

Get enough sleep. If you are always tired, you are likely to get sick more often.

8

Stress less. Stress impacts your immune system.

9

Consider eating more yogurt or fermented foods. These contain good bacteria for your digestion.

Sources:
Influenza Hub 65+. Understanding How the Flu Impacts Chronic Diseases. Available at: <https://www.flu65plus.com/stories/understanding-how-flu-impacts-chronic-diseases>.
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Weekly U.S. Influenza Surveillance Report. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/index.htm>.
CDC. Adults 65 and Older Need a Flu Shot. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/seniors/seniors-vaccination-factsheet.pdf>.
CDC. Influenza Vaccines. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/adults/downloads/fs-influenza-hcp.pdf>.
CDC. Summary of the 2017-2018 Influenza Season. FluView report of 2017–2018 influenza season. Available at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season-2017-2018.htm>.
Schoeder, M., 9 Ways to Boost Your Immune System. U.S. News & World Report. Accessed on September 19, 2018. Available at: <https://health.usnews.com/wellness/slideshows/9-ways-to-boost-your-immune-system>.

This material was prepared by Health Services Advisory Group, the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for Arizona, California, Florida, Ohio, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy. Reprinted with permission from New England Quality Innovation Network. Publication No. QN-11SOW-F-1-10152018-02