

THE FLU CAN BE DEVASTATING FOR ADULTS 65+

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, adults aged 65 and older are at high risk of complications from influenza infection – also called “the flu.”



WHAT SHOULD YOU KNOW?

While adults age 65+ represented approximately 15-17% of the Canadian population, they have accounted for up to*:

70%
OF FLU-RELATED
HOSPITALIZATIONS

91%
OF FLU-RELATED
DEATHS

*Based on Public Health Agency of Canada's FluWatch influenza surveillance data from 2013-2019

Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent infection from influenza virus. However, not all influenza vaccines are equally effective in adults aged 65 and older.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Adults age 65 and older are more severely affected by flu because:

- The immune system becomes weaker with age and, as such, does not respond as well to standard flu vaccination
- They have less ability to fight the infection
- The flu can worsen pre-existing chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease or renal disease

HOW CAN GETTING THE FLU BE DANGEROUS FOR OLDER ADULTS?

The flu is different from a cold. The symptoms of flu infection – like body aches, fever, cough, headache, loss of appetite, chills, sore throat and fatigue – can be more severe and may require people to stay in bed for several days.

Although the flu is difficult for everyone, it can have serious consequences for people aged 65 and older because, with age, the immune system becomes weaker and less able to fight infection.

People aged 65 and older are at much higher risk of flu infection and its consequences than younger adults.

HOW CAN GETTING THE FLU BE DANGEROUS FOR OLDER ADULTS?

Adults aged 65 and older and those with chronic health conditions are at high risk of flu-related complications or hospitalization.



Cardiac (heart or blood vessel) disease



Diabetes



Anemia



Lung disease



Renal (kidney) disease



Neurologic conditions (e.g., seizures)

The flu is also known to worsen pre-existing medical conditions such as heart disease. Research has shown that flu can trigger heart attacks and strokes in individuals who have heart disease.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Ask your doctor about the different flu vaccines that are available, and which ones may be best suited for you.

- ✓ Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent flu
- ✓ Flu vaccines help your body build its own defences so it can do a better job of preventing or fighting infection caused by influenza virus
- ✓ Flu vaccines are prepared specifically for each season. Vaccination before the beginning of the flu season is recommended

In Canada, the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) states that*:

At an individual level, high-dose flu vaccine should be offered to persons 65 years of age and older.

*2020-21 recommendations



Flu vaccines do not provide 100% protection and do not treat the flu or prevent its complications.

MORE INFORMATION ON FLU VACCINES FOR SENIORS

- **Canadian Immunization Guide on Seasonal Influenza Vaccine**

Available at: <https://bit.ly/3fHdzR0>

- **Immunize Canada – A public health agency dedicated to immunization awareness and advocacy**

Available at: <https://immunize.ca>

- **Sanofi Pasteur – One of Canada's leading research-based vaccine producers**

Available at: fluzone.ca



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