

Seniors: Vaccinate for Your Health's Sake!

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC - safer, healthier people.

Embracing your golden years can mean exploring exciting, new activities; enjoying grandchildren; and spending time with friends and family. Unfortunately, it can also mean that you are more vulnerable to getting a severe illness from the flu. CDC recommends that everyone age 50 and older get a yearly flu vaccine to help stay healthy and active.

For most people, getting influenza, commonly known as “the flu,” means feeling achy and feverish for a week or so. But for older adults, the flu can be much more serious, even deadly. Each year in the U.S., an average of 36,000 people die and more than 200,000 are hospitalized from serious flu complications. Ninety percent of flu deaths and more than half of hospitalizations from the flu occur in people age 65 and older. Research shows that 30 percent of all Americans age 65 and older don't get an annual flu vaccination.

Vaccination is the first and most important step in protecting yourself and the people you love against this serious disease. Getting vaccinated means not only protecting yourself, but not spreading it to your spouse, children, or grandchildren. The CDC recommends getting the vaccine as soon as it becomes available in your community because it takes the body about two weeks to build up immunity. But if you don't get the vaccine early, it's not too late to get it in December and beyond, since flu is most common in January and February; it can even continue into April.

The flu vaccine is safe and effective, and because the three influenza viruses in the flu shot are killed, you can't get influenza from the vaccine. Since flu viruses change every year, the flu vaccine is updated annually, which makes it necessary to get vaccinated every year. For seniors, the flu shot is a necessity for healthy living. Getting vaccinated is the best and easiest way to prevent the flu.

Thank you for listening, and check in again soon for a new “Flu Stop with CDC.”

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.