

# 65 or older? You and **THE FLU**



Are you 65 or older? If so, the flu is more dangerous for you.

## Why?

- ▶ Your immune defenses become weaker with age and make you more likely to get seriously ill from the flu.
- ▶ About 90 percent of flu-related deaths in the U.S. occur in people 65 or older. More than 60 percent of people this age with the flu are **hospitalized**.

To protect yourself from the flu (influenza), you need to get the flu shot.

## Is the flu a serious disease?

Yes. The seasonal or annual flu is a virus that affects the lungs, throat, nose, and other parts of the body. Unlike the common cold, the flu comes on suddenly, makes you very sick for a week or longer, and can send you to the hospital.

When a sick person coughs or sneezes, tiny droplets fly through the air. You can get sick from the droplets if they land in your nose, eyes, or mouth. You can also get the flu by touching a surface, like a table or a doorknob, that has flu virus on it, then touching your mouth or nose.

You can get the flu from others even when they don't feel sick. Staying away from people who look sick is not enough to protect you.

Each year in the United States, over 23,600 people **die** from the flu.

## Why should I get the flu shot?

- ▶ To save your LIFE. Because you are 65 or older, your risk of death or serious illness from the flu is higher than it is for most people.
- ▶ To save time and money and enjoy a healthier life. When you get a flu shot, you will lose fewer days to sickness.

The flu vaccine is quick, easy and safe protection. ....→

## Can the flu shot give me the flu?

No. This is not possible, because the shot is made with only dead flu virus.

## Is the flu shot safe?

Yes. The flu shot is very safe; its benefits far outweigh any possible side effects. Some people may have redness and soreness where they received the shot, but other side effects are rare.

## Do I need to get a flu shot every year?

Yes. The flu virus changes every year, so the flu shot must change too. Because you are 65 or older, you should be among the first to get your flu shot in the fall.

## Should my family and friends get a shot, too?

Yes. Everyone can get the flu. When the people around you get the flu shot they not only protect themselves, they are less likely to spread the flu to you.

## Should I get a pneumococcal (pneumonia) shot?

Yes. Just as you are at a higher risk for the flu, you are also at higher risk for pneumonia. Pneumonia is a serious complication of the flu, and it can be life threatening. There are two types of pneumococcal vaccines -- PCV13 and PPSV23. You will need both vaccines to be protected. Talk to your doctor about when you should receive them

## How do I get the seasonal flu and pneumococcal (pneumonia) shots?

Talk to your doctor, or contact your local health department.

For more information about the flu shot, visit:

[health.ny.gov](http://health.ny.gov)



**Department  
of Health**