

# INFLUENZA AWARENESS

HEALTH CARE AWARENESS



Influenza Awareness Month

## Preparing for Flu Season—Tips on Preparing Your Senior and how to Get Your Free Flu Shot this Season

*Seniors 65 and older should get a flu shot to help prevent illnesses this season. Learn the importance of getting the vaccine and where you can get it for free.*

The holidays are often a time of celebration, family and excitement. But for individuals living with dementia and the caregivers who support them, the holidays can present new challenges.

For an individual living with dementia, the holidays can present physical, mental and emotional factors that may disrupt their day-to-day activities.

### Preparing for Flu Season

If you help care for older adults, then you can start preparing for the flu season.

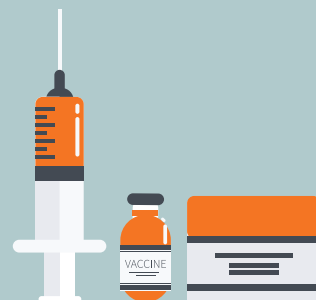
1. Find out where they can get a flu shot. Use [this tool](http://www.cdc.gov/flu) (www.cdc.gov/flu) to find a location near you.
2. Plan in advance. It takes approximately two weeks for the vaccine to set in and for protection to begin.
3. Talk with their doctor about making sure they are also up to date with their [pneumococcal vaccination](#). This vaccine helps protect against pneumococcal disease, such as pneumonia, meningitis, and bloodstream infections.
4. Get the vaccine for yourself as well.

Between  
**54%-70%**  
of seasonal flu-related  
**hospitalizations**  
have occurred among  
**people over age 65.**

### Flu Season in Swing

The flu season is officially in full swing. According to the CDC, approximately 5% to 20% of U.S. residents get the flu and more than 200,000 people are hospitalized for flu-related complications each year.

People ages 65 and older are at greater risk of getting serious complications from the flu, because their immune defenses weaken with age. Recent studies have shown that between 71% and 85% of seasonal flu-related deaths have occurred in people ages 65 and older.



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## Getting Vaccinated

Seniors can help prevent the flu in the first place by getting the flu vaccine. The vaccine should be received each year, between October and January. The earlier it's received in the season, the more protected individuals will be.

### There are two vaccines designed specifically for people 65 and older:

- The "high dose vaccine" is designed for people 65 and older and contains 4 times the amount of antigen as the standard flu shot. The shot is associated with a stronger immune response following vaccination. Results from a clinical trial showed that those who received the high dose vaccine had 24% fewer influenza infections compared to those who received the standard vaccine.
- The adjuvanted flu vaccine, Fluad, is made with MF59 adjuvant which is designed to help create a stronger immune response to vaccination. In a Canadian observational study, Fluad was 63% more effective than regular-dose unadjuvanted flu shots. This vaccine will be available for the first time in the U.S. this year.

Both vaccines can result in more mild side effects than compared to the standard-dose vaccine. Mild side effects can include pain, redness or swelling at the injection site, headache, muscle ache and malaise. Any flu vaccine is recommended by the CDC for people over age 65.

### Where can you get the flu shot for free?

#### 1. Your Employer

Some employers offer free flu shots to their employees. Sometimes they even offer free flu shots to family members. Check with your employer to see if they will be offering free flu shots this year.

#### 2. Your Physician through your Health Insurance

If you have health insurance through your employer or the public health insurance exchange, your health insurance may cover the full cost of your flu shot. Call your doctor's office to see if you are eligible.

#### 3. Your County Health Department

Many county health departments offer free flu shots to children and the elderly. Check out your county's website for more information.



## Low Cost Flu Shots

If the above options won't work, there are many stores that offer the flu shot at a low cost. Check each individual website to see what you may need to bring to get your shot. Most require your insurance card, an identification card and an immunization consent form.

- Costco: \$14.99 for standard trivalent. No quadrivalent (yet this year).
- CVS: No trivalent (yet this year). \$39.99 for quadrivalent.
- Walgreen's: \$31.99 for standard trivalent. \$39.99 for quadrivalent.
- Rite Aid: \$32.99 for standard trivalent. \$39.99 for quadrivalent.
- Meijer: \$27.99 for standard trivalent. \$50 for quadrivalent.
- Wal Mart: \$27.88 for standard trivalent. \$32.54 for quadrivalent.
- Sam's Club: \$15 for standard trivalent. \$25 for quadrivalent.
- Kroger: \$30 for standard trivalent. \$40 for quadrivalent.

(source): [www.20somethingfinance.com](http://www.20somethingfinance.com)



## Home Care Tip:

Talk with a doctor to find out which dose of the vaccine is right for your senior or loved one.