

health for life

PEOPLE AT HIGH RISK OF DEVELOPING FLU-RELATED COMPLICATIONS

Most people who get the flu will have mild illness, will not need medical care or antiviral drugs, and will recover in less than two weeks. Some people, however, are more likely to get flu complications that result in being hospitalized and occasionally result in death. Pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus infections and ear infections are examples of flu-related complications. The flu also can make chronic health problems worse. For example, people with asthma may experience asthma attacks while they have the flu, and people with chronic congestive heart failure may have worsening of this condition that is triggered by the flu. The list on the following page includes the groups of people more likely to get flu-related complications if they get sick from influenza.

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TAKE TIME TO GET A FLU VACCINE

The best way to protect against influenza is to get a flu vaccine every flu season.

Why get vaccinated against influenza (flu)? Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory disease that can lead to serious complications, hospitalization, or even death. Anyone can get the flu, and vaccination is the single best way to protect against influenza. Even healthy children and adults can get very sick from the flu and spread it to family and friends. Flu viruses are constantly changing. Each flu season, different flu viruses can spread. Getting vaccinated against the flu every season protects against the three influenza viruses that research indicates will cause the most illness this season. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the flu vaccine as the first and most important step in preventing flu.

Who should get a flu vaccine?

Everyone is at risk for seasonal influenza. Health experts now recommend that everyone 6 months of age and older get vaccinated against influenza. Each flu season, different flu viruses can spread and they can affect people differently based on their body's ability to fight infection. Even healthy children and adults can get very sick from the flu, but certain people are at greater risk for serious complications if they get the flu, including:

- People 65 years and older
- Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old
- People with certain chronic health conditions like asthma and COPD, diabetes (both type 1 and 2), heart disease, neurological conditions, and certain other health conditions
- Pregnant women

See "People at High Risk of Developing Flu-Related Complications" at www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm for a full list.

DID YOU KNOW?

Health experts now recommend that everyone 6 months of age and older get vaccinated against influenza.

Who should NOT get a flu vaccine?

Influenza vaccine is not approved for use in children younger than 6 months so they should not be vaccinated, but their caregivers should be vaccinated instead. And people who are sick with fever should wait until their symptoms pass to get vaccinated.

Some people should not be vaccinated before talking to their doctor. This includes:

- People who have a severe allergy to chicken eggs
- People who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination in the past
- People who developed Guillian-Barré syndrome (GBS) within 6 weeks of getting an influenza vaccine previously.

If you have questions about whether you should get a flu vaccine, consult your health care provider.

When to Get Vaccinated

Get vaccinated as soon as the vaccine becomes available in your community. Getting vaccinated as soon as it is available provides protection in case the flu season comes early and will protect you throughout the entire flu season.

Flu vaccines are offered in many doctors' offices and clinics. Even if you don't have a regular doctor or nurse, you can get a flu vaccine at other places like your local health department, a pharmacy, an urgent care clinic, and maybe your school, college health center, or workplace.

WHAT KINDS OF FLU VACCINES ARE AVAILABLE?

There are two types of flu vaccine available:

1. An inactivated (killed) vaccine, also known as the flu shot, which is given by injection into the muscle, and
2. A live, attenuated (weakened) vaccine, also known as the nasal spray, which is sprayed into the nostrils.

This chart indicates who can get each of the two vaccines.

	(Inactivated) Flu Shot	(LIAV) Nasal Spray
Healthy, non-pregnant children and adults (2-49 years)	✓	✓
Pregnant women	✓	
Infants (6 – 24 months)	✓	
People with chronic conditions like asthma or diabetes	✓	
Older Adults/Seniors	✓	

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

All ADVANTAGE *Care Select* members may now contact us for assistance in scheduling transportation services for medical appointments. Please call us at 1-800-784-3981 for assistance with your transportation needs.

Reminder: All transportation should be arranged at least 3 days before the appointment.



HOW DOES MAINTAINING HEALTHY CHOLESTEROL LEVELS HELP PEOPLE WITH DIABETES STAY HEALTHY?

Several things, including having diabetes, can make your blood cholesterol level too high. When cholesterol is too high, the insides of large blood vessels become narrowed, even clogged, which can lead to heart disease and stroke, the biggest health problems for people with diabetes. Maintaining normal cholesterol levels will help prevent these diseases, and can help prevent circulation problems, also an issue for people with diabetes.

Have your cholesterol checked at least once a year. Total cholesterol should be under 200; LDL ("bad" cholesterol) should be under 100; HDL ("good" cholesterol) should be above 40 in men and above 50 in women; and triglycerides should be under 150.



Healthy eating, medications, and physical activity can help you reach your cholesterol targets. Keeping cholesterol levels under control can reduce the risk of cardiovascular complications of diabetes by 20% to 50%.

WHAT ROUTINE MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS AND TESTS ARE NEEDED FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES?

Your doctors should:

- Measure your blood pressure at every visit
- Check your feet for sores at every visit, and give a thorough foot exam at least once a year
- Give you a hemoglobin A1C test at least twice a year, to determine what your average blood glucose level was for the past 2 to 3 months
- Test your urine and blood to check your kidney function at least once a year
- Test your blood lipids (fats) – total cholesterol; LDL, or low-density lipoprotein ("bad" cholesterol); HDL, or high-density lipoprotein ("good" cholesterol); and triglycerides at least once a year

You should also get a dental checkup twice a year, a dilated eye exam once a year, an annual flu shot, and pneumonia shot

DEPRESSION

Everyone occasionally feels blue or sad, but these feelings are usually fleeting and pass within a couple of days. When a woman has a depressive disorder, it interferes with daily life and normal functioning, and causes pain for both the woman with the disorder and those who care about her. Depression is a common but serious illness, and most who have it need treatment to get better.

Depression affects both men and women, but more women than men are likely to be diagnosed with depression in any given year.¹ Efforts to explain this difference are ongoing, as researchers explore certain factors (biological, social, etc.) that are unique to women.

Many women with a depressive illness never seek treatment. But the vast majority, even those with the most severe depression, can get better with treatment.

You may feel exhausted, helpless and hopeless. It may be extremely difficult to take any action to help yourself. But it is important to realize that these feelings are part of the depression and do not reflect actual circumstances. As you recognize your depression and begin treatment, negative thinking will fade. In the meantime:

- Engage in mild activity or exercise. Go to a movie, a ball game, or another event or activity that you once enjoyed. Participate in religious, social or other activities.
- Set realistic goals for yourself.
- Break up large tasks into small ones, set some priorities and do what you can as you can.
- Try to spend time with other people and confide in a trusted friend or relative. Try not to isolate yourself, and let others help you.
- Expect your mood to improve gradually, not immediately. Do not expect to suddenly “snap out of” your depression. Often during treatment for depression, sleep and appetite will begin to improve before your depressed mood lifts.
- Postpone important decisions, such as getting married or divorced or changing jobs, until you feel better. Discuss decisions with others who know you well and have a more objective view of your situation.
- Be confident that positive thinking will replace negative thoughts as your depression responds to treatment.



COMPLIANCE HELP LINE

ADVANTAGE wants to make sure there is a method for reporting concerns about questionable activities, tips about potential fraud, accounting, financial reports, or violations. ADVANTAGE has established an external telephone help line to receive complaints and concerns. Calls are received by an outside entity and relayed to the Corporate Compliance Officer. If the case is concerning accounting practices and financial reports, it will be relayed to the Financial Audit Committee. ADVANTAGE Members are always welcome to contact our customer service lines. However, the external help line is an option for those who wish to use it:

Independent and External Help Line Telephone Number
1-888-333-9576

The help line administrator will offer callers the option to remain anonymous and assure those who identify themselves that their confidentiality will be kept within the limits allowed by law. No attempt will be made to identify a caller who asks to be kept anonymous.

REMINDERS:

- If you move or change phone numbers, please call us at **800-784-3981**
- Our Nurse Line is available 24 hours a day: **800-244-1896**

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Information in HEALTH FOR LIFE comes from a wide range of medical experts. If you have any concerns or questions about specific content that may affect your health, please contact your healthcare provider.

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Member Services: 800-784-3981



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