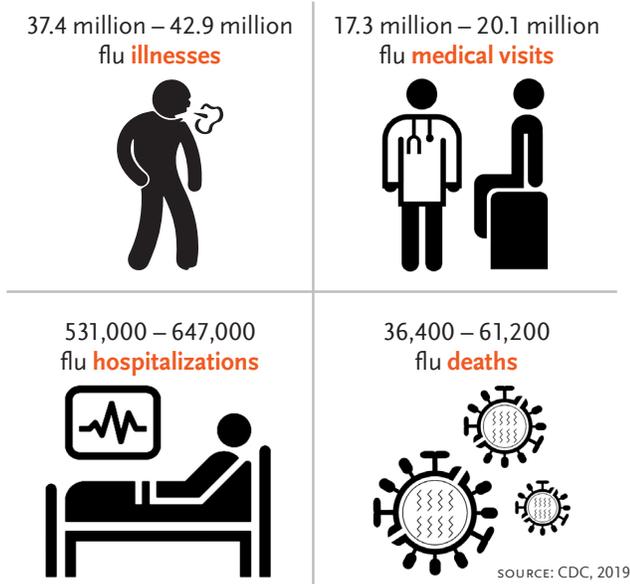


Communicating the Benefits of Seasonal Influenza Vaccine

Influenza (flu) severity varies from year to year, but flu always brings serious consequences.ⁱ

To help patients understand the importance of protecting themselves and their loved ones, public health officials and providers should communicate the benefits of flu vaccination in helping to reduce disease outcomes, including hospitalization and death. Although the effectiveness of the flu vaccine can vary, overall the vaccine markedly lowers the risk of illness, hospitalization and deaths related to influenza.ⁱⁱ

CDC estimates that, from Oct 1, 2018–May 4, 2019, there were:



Tips How to Discuss Vaccine Effectiveness

- Keep it simple: “Flu vaccine helps reduce risk of hospitalization and death.”
- Use a presumptive approach: “Today we are giving you your annual flu vaccination.”
- Communicate why we vaccinate: “Vaccination prevents flu and severe outcomes of flu.” “Preventing the flu also means preventing missing work, doctor appointments, and unnecessary medications.”
- Communicate the variability and unpredictability of flu: “This is why it is best to get an annual flu vaccination.”
- Acknowledge that flu vaccination is not always a perfect match with the circulating virus types. But flu and flu-related severe illnesses are common: outbreaks occur almost every year. “The vaccine is the best way to reduce your risk of flu and its negative outcomes.”



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Vaccination rates* remain well below optimal levels:

- 63%** children 6 months–17 year
- 45%** adults 18+ years
- 68%** adults 65+ years
- 68%** healthcare personnel
- 54%** pregnant women



*Estimates from the 2018–19 influenza season. Source: CDC FluVaxView

What are the Benefits of Seasonal Flu Vaccine?

Research has shown that flu vaccination:

▶ Reduces Hospitalization and Death

- ✓ Pediatric deaths from flu were cut in half for children with underlying high-risk medical conditions and by two-thirds for healthy childrenⁱⁱⁱ
- ✓ Influenza hospitalizations were cut in half for all adults (including those 65+ years of age)^{iv}
- ✓ Influenza hospitalizations dropped dramatically among people with chronic health conditions – by 79% for people with diabetes^v and 52%^{vi} for those with chronic lung disease

▶ Reduces Severity of Illness in Hospitalized Individuals

- ✓ Among adults hospitalized with flu, intensive care unit (ICU) admissions decreased by more than half (59%), and fewer days were spent in ICU if vaccinated^{vii}
- ✓ Children’s risk of admission to a pediatric intensive care unit (PICU) for flu-related illness was cut by almost 75%^{viii}

▶ Reduces Risks for Major Cardiac Events

- ✓ Risk of a major cardiac event (e.g. heart attack) among adults with existing cardiovascular disease was reduced by more than one-third^{ix}

▶ Protects Pregnant Women and Their Babies

- ✓ For pregnant women, flu-associated acute respiratory infections were cut in half^x, and flu-associated hospitalizations were reduced by 40%^{xi}
- ✓ Influenza illnesses and influenza-related hospitalizations in infants under 6 months of age fell by half when their mothers were vaccinated.^{xii,xiii}

FOOTNOTES

- i CDC. 2018–2019 U.S. Flu Season: Preliminary Burden Estimates www.cdc.gov/flu/about/burden/preliminary-in-season-estimates.htm
- ii CDC. CDC Seasonal Flu Vaccine Effectiveness Studies www.cdc.gov/flu/vaccines-work/effectiveness-studies.htm
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- v Colquhoun, 1997, *Epidemiology & Infection*. DOI: 10.1017/S095026889700825
- vi Nichol, 1999, *Annals of Internal Medicine*. DOI: 10.7326/0003-4819-130-5-199903020-00003
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