

## INFLUENZA CAN COST 50+ AMERICANS WORK, TRAVEL AND FAMILY TIME

***MANY UNVACCINATED EACH YEAR LEAVES RISK FOR SPREADING DISEASE AND SEVERE COMPLICATIONS TO LOVED ONES, FRIENDS EVERY SEASON***

*The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently partnered with the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases to conduct a media telephone briefing to address alarmingly low influenza vaccination among those 50+ and its impact on themselves and their close contacts. Below are some highlights of the briefing:*

### **Influenza can cause more severe complications among 50+ Americans**

- **Influenza is NOT the common cold**; its effects can be more debilitating, longer lasting and, in some cases, can lead to hospitalization and even death
- Compared to younger adults, **those 50 to 64 years old are four times more likely to be hospitalized** from influenza-related causes; those 65 or older are more than 20 times more likely to be hospitalized
- Influenza is responsible for more than **200,000 hospitalizations each year**
- On average, the **hospitalization of an adult with influenza costs \$8,000 to \$10,000** – even more if intensive care or prolonged hospital stay is required
- Those aged 50 to 64 are 15 times **more likely than younger adults to die from influenza-related causes**; those 65 or older are more than 200 times more likely to die from influenza-related causes
- Influenza and its complications result in an average of **36,000 deaths annually** in the U.S., and more than 90% of these deaths are in adults who are greater than 65 years old

### **Vaccination is the best protection, yet rates are seriously low (especially among Americans 50+)**

- **Only 36% of Americans aged 50 to 64 get vaccinated every year**; roughly 60% of those 65 years and older are immunized
- In fact, **nearly 70% of the U.S. population should be vaccinated**, according to CDC recommendations, because of their age, health status or they have close contact with persons who are targeted for vaccination

**50+ caregivers are responsible for keeping family and loved ones healthy year-round**

- Many **Americans 50+ provide care for older parents, children and young grandchildren**, and could potentially spread the influenza virus to these more vulnerable groups
  - 71% of today's baby boomers have at least one living parent (Pew Research Center)
  - Approximately one in every eight baby boomers are simultaneously raising a child and providing some form of financial assistance to a parent (Pew Research Center)
- Vaccination of Americans 50+ not only protects this population, but also helps provide a “**cocoon of protection**” for their loved ones who may be at greater risk for complications
- **Immunization should begin as soon as vaccine is available and continue into December, January and even later**
  - The vaccine continues to provide protective benefits even after disease activity is seen in a community

### **Flu is a risk to workers, travelers**

- On average, workers who must miss work because of influenza **miss one to three days**
- Influenza is considered to be **the most vaccine-preventable disease acquired during travel**
  - **Influenza strikes different regions at different times**; travelers should consider the season of the hemisphere they are traveling to when considering protection against the disease before travel

### **About NFID**

Founded in 1973, NFID is a non-profit organization dedicated to public and professional education programs about the causes, treatment and prevention of infectious diseases.

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