Are you at risk for flu and related complications?

Influenza (flu) is not just a common cold. Anyone can get sick with flu, but certain people are at high risk of developing serious flu-related complications.

**Children and Infants**

- Children younger than age 5 years—especially those younger than age 2 years—are at high risk of developing serious flu-related complications, including death.

- Because infants younger than age 6 months are too young to be vaccinated, the best way to protect them is to ensure that those around them are vaccinated and that mothers get vaccinated while they are still pregnant.

- Studies indicate that babies whose mothers are vaccinated during pregnancy are protected from flu infection for several months after they are born.

**Adults age 65 years and older**

- Adults age 65 years and older typically are at greater risk of flu-related complications because of weakened immune systems.

- During most flu seasons, older adults account for the majority of flu-related deaths and more than half of all flu-related hospitalizations.

- Several vaccine options are available specifically for adults age 65 years and older, including high dose and adjuvanted flu vaccines, both of which help them build a higher immune response.

- For more information, visit: [www.nfid.org/flu/olderadults](http://www.nfid.org/flu/olderadults)

**Pregnant women (and women up to two weeks postpartum)**

- Flu is more likely to cause severe illness in pregnant women than in women who are not pregnant.

- Pregnant women with flu are at increased risk of hospitalization.

- Infants born to mothers who received the flu vaccine during pregnancy have a lower risk of contracting flu or being hospitalized because of flu in their first few months after birth.

**References**

People with chronic health conditions are at greater risk of being exposed to and possibly contracting flu. In addition to protecting themselves, routine influenza vaccination of healthcare professionals helps keep their patients safe. Healthcare professionals who are vaccinated reduce the incidence of flu-related illness and death among their patients. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and most major medical groups recommend that all healthcare professionals be vaccinated annually against flu.

For more information about individuals at higher risk for developing flu-related complications, visit: www.nfidos.org/flu-chronic-health-conditions and www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/index.htm

References

5. Sethi S. Infection as a comorbidity of COPD. Eur Respir J. 2010;35:1209-1215.