

# Are You at Risk for Serious Flu-Related Complications?

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

- Infants and children age 5 years and younger
- Adults age 65 and older
- Pregnant women (and women up to 2 weeks postpartum)
- People with certain chronic health conditions
- Certain racial and ethnic groups

Annual flu vaccination is recommended for everyone age 6 months and older to help reduce the risk of flu-related complications

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



[www.nfid.org](http://www.nfid.org)



## Infants and Children

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

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



## Certain Racial/Ethnic Groups

Certain racial and ethnic groups are at increased risk for flu-related hospitalization, including Black, Hispanic or Latino, and American Indian or Alaska Native persons



## Older Adults 65+

Adults age 65 years and older are at greater risk of flu-related complications, in part because of weakened immune systems

Older adults account for the majority of flu-related deaths and more than half of all flu-related hospitalizations



## Pregnant Women (and women up to 2 weeks postpartum)

Flu is more likely to cause severe illness in pregnant women

Vaccinating pregnant women helps protect newborns for the first several months after their birth, when they are too young to get vaccinated

## People with Certain Chronic Health Conditions



### Heart disease:

Heart disease patients are 6 times more likely to have a heart attack within 7 days of influenza infection



### Obesity:

Individuals with a body mass index (BMI) of 40+ have a higher rate of serious flu-related complications, including hospitalization



### Lung disease (including asthma and/or COPD):

Flu can increase inflammation in the lungs and airways, which can trigger asthma attacks and make COPD symptoms worse



### Compromised immune system:

People who have weakened immune systems, including current and former cancer patients and those living with HIV/AIDS, are at higher risk of developing serious flu-related complications, including hospitalization and death



### Diabetes:

Diabetes can interfere with the body's ability to fight flu, and flu infection can interfere with management of blood sugar levels