



Fight the Flu and Knock out Pneumonia!

As we age, our immune system provides less protection against germs and viruses which allows the flu to turn into a more serious condition such as pneumonia. Older adults with diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or heart disease have weaker immune systems making it harder to fight off infection.

To protect yourself and your family, there are a number of practices you can follow to help avoid getting the flu or pneumonia.

- Get your flu shot. Stay ahead of the flu by getting vaccinated before flu season. The vaccine helps protect against getting the flu. The flu can often lead to pneumonia, especially in older adults or in people who have chronic (long-term) diseases.
- Don't smoke. Smoking damages tiny hairs in the lungs that help remove germs and bacteria causing a higher risk a developing heart or lung disease.
- Wash your hands. To remove viruses from your skin, scrub your hands with water and soap for 20 seconds; wash the back of your hands, between your fingers and under your nails. If you do not have soap or water available, use an alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid people who are ill. Keep your distance from people who have colds or the flu. During the flu season, try to avoid areas where large groups of people gather, like the mall.
- Keep your surroundings clean. Use sanitizer to clean door knobs, light switches, key boards, countertops, and any surface your hands come in contact with. This can help reduce your risk of spreading a cold or flu.
- Stay healthy. Get plenty of sleep, drink lots of water, and make sure to include fruits and vegetables in your diet. A healthy immune system fights off colds and flu.
- Following a few preventive measures can help to keep you from getting the flu or a cold. If you become ill, keep these tips in mind to stop the flu from turning into pneumonia.

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