**Fight the Flu This Fall**

Fall is the time to enjoy colorful leaves, delicious pumpkin treats, cooler temperatures and cozy fires. It’s also the time to start making plans to gather with friends and loved ones during the upcoming holiday season. While looking forward to sharing those good times, make sure you won’t be sharing an unwanted gift. Flu season is upon us and it’s important to take precautions to protect yourself and your loved ones.

The flu—or influenza—is a contagious respiratory illness that can be severe and life-threatening. Even healthy older adults are at higher risk of contracting the flu due to age-related weakening of the immune system, making it more difficult to fight off disease. And for those who may be managing a chronic condition, such as diabetes or heart disease, the flu can be even more dangerous as you may be more likely to develop complications or become hospitalized. Flu combined with pneumonia is one of the top 10 causes of death for those age 65+ in the U.S. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the best way to prevent seasonal flu is to get vaccinated every year.

Flu season in the U.S. typically peaks between November and March, so it’s a good idea to get your shot early to prevent contracting or spreading the flu during those holiday gatherings. It’s important to note that it does take two weeks after getting the shot for your body to build up full immunity.

Make an appointment with your physician or visit your local clinic or drug store to receive the shot. Medicare Part B covers the cost of the flu vaccine once a year when it’s given by doctors or health care providers who accept Medicare. If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan, you may need to use an in-network doctor or pharmacy.

Do yourself and your loved ones a favor and get the flu shot today!

More information about the preventive benefits covered by Medicare can be found in the *Medicare and You 2019* handbook or on the Medicare website at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) . For local assistance with Medicare or other benefits, contact <YOUR LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION HERE>.

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