**Flu Shots are More Important than Ever!**

(For Reprint)

The flu season is upon us and that means it’s time to act! Getting the flu shot may be more important than ever this year due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The vaccine can reduce the risk of flu illness, hospitalization and death, and it can also reduce the strain on the healthcare system, which is continuing to use hospital beds and other resources for COVID-19 patients.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that almost everyone 6 months of age and older get a seasonal flu vaccine each year, and for people 65 years and older it is especially important. 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 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 to others.

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 per flu season 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.

In addition to getting a flu shot, people 65 and older should take the same everyday precautions that the CDC recommends for everyone, including avoiding people who are sick, covering your cough and washing your hands often.

Don’t wait! Taking precautions now can protect you and your loved ones, so schedule your flu shot today.

More information about the preventive benefits covered by Medicare can be found in the *Medicare and You 2020* 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>.