

Older *Adults*



Seasonal Flu/Colds

Adults age 65 and older have a weaker immune system, making them at risk of contracting the flu. All older adults are advised to get the flu vaccine. The vaccine is a typical-dose flu shot or a high-dose shot that produces a stronger immune response. Your doctor will know which vaccine is best for you. If you have flu symptoms, call your doctor at once. The best way to avoid the flu is to get the flu vaccine as soon as it becomes available.



Steps to Prevent Cold and Flu

- Wash hands often with soap and water.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid close contact with those who are ill.
- Get enough sleep and exercise.
- Drink plenty of liquids and practice healthy eating habits.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- If you are sick, stay home at least 24 hours after your fever is gone without the help of fever medications.

*Information gathered from Flu.gov
www.flu.gov/at-risk/seniors*



Hand Sanitizer Prevents the Spread of Germs

About 2 million hospital patients get infections every year in the United States. Practicing healthy hand hygiene is an easy tool to prevent infection for healthcare workers, patients, families and loved ones.

Facts about Hand Sanitizers

- Hand hygiene is one of the easiest and most effective ways to prevent the spread of infection.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are more effective than soap and anti-microbial soaps.
- Hand sanitizers kill MRSA and influenza, HIV and Hepatitis B viruses.
- Even when a healthcare worker wears gloves, diseases can still spread if gloves are not changed between different patients.
- Continue to use hand-sanitizer even when your hands are dry. Many sanitizers have lotions added. Using lotion often will help end hand dryness and irritation.

How to Use Hand Sanitizers

- Apply a palmful of sanitizer into a cupped hand.
- Rub hands palm to palm with fingers interlaced.



- Rub backs of fingers to opposite palms with fingers interlocked.
- Rub the left thumb in the right palm and do the same with the other thumb.
- Rub in circles backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of each hand in the opposite palm.
- When hands are dry, they are sanitized.

Information gathered from Johns Hopkins Center for Innovation in Quality Patient Care and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

*www.hopkinsmedicine.org/innovation_quality_patient_care
www.cdc.gov/Handhygiene*

Trips and Falls

The risk of injury from falls increases in adults over age 55. Doorways, ramps, hallways, uneven surfaces, areas prone to spills, heights, unstable surfaces, ladders and stairs are the most common places for falls to occur.

Fall Prevention Tips

- Clean up spills immediately.

- Keep cords out of walking areas.
- Do not walk on wet floors.
- Keep cabinets and drawers closed.
- Install handrails on both sides of all staircases.
- Place furniture away from high traffic areas.
- Do not climb over child safety gates.
- Never stand on a chair or other item on wheels.
- Grip the rungs of a ladder while climbing.
- Keep three points of your body in contact with a ladder at all times.

*Information gathered from the National Safety Council
www.nsc.org*



Preventing Falls at Home

In a given year, one third of adults over 65 will fall. A few simple tips will help prevent broken bones and other injuries caused by falls.

- Keep items within reach in order.
- Use a grasping device to reach items on the floor.



- Be patient and avoid hurrying from place to place.
- Wear well-gripping, low-heeled shoes.

*Information gathered from
National Osteoporosis Foundation
www.nof.org/articles/17*



Elder Abuse

One in ten older adults is impacted by abuse. Elder abuse is physical, emotional or sexual abuse. Exploitation, neglect and abandonment are also considered abuse. Elder abuse can happen



- Use a sturdy stepping stool with wide steps.
- Purchase a cordless or cell phone to carry with you when moving from room to room.
- Avoid cords and throw rugs on the floor and keep floors free of clutter.
- Attach skid-proof backing to area rugs.
- Do not use wax on hardwood or bare floors.
- To avoid dizziness, sit up slowly from sitting or lying down.
- Keep a flashlight near the bed.
- Use safety rails in the bathroom.
- Keep hallways and stairwells well lit and install handrails.
- Watch consumption of alcohol and medications that cause dizziness.

to anyone in any living or relationship situation. Living in socially isolating conditions, personal problems related to the abuser, lifelong domestic violence, and memory loss make older adults prone to abuse.

Physical warning signs of elder abuse include unexplained weight loss, bruises, broken bones, marks and other skin discolorations, bruises in the genital area, untreated medical needs and poor personal hygiene. Withdrawal from activities, depression, arguments with caregivers, and personality changes are behavioral signs indicating abuse. Unexplained changes in personal finances and threats by spouses or medical staff are other signs of possible abuse.



If you or a loved one is victimized by abuse or neglect, tell your doctor, friend or family member and call the Adult Protective Services program near you. You will need to provide your name and contact information when filing a report, but your identity will not be disclosed to the victim or abuser.

*Information gathered from National Center
on Elder Abuse
www.ncea.aoa.gov*



The Danger of Splitting Medications

Unless written in a drug's prescribing information, splitting tablets is a dangerous way to save money on medications. If you are considering splitting tablets to save cost, always consult your doctor first.

Splitting Tablets is Risky Business

- Adults often buy higher strength tablets with the intent to split them, but forget to split the tablet when it is time to take the medication. They end up taking the whole dose, leading to possible overdose or death.
- Even a scored tablet may not contain the same amount of medication when cut in half. Despite the appearance of both halves, one half may have more medicine than the other half.
- Tablets have different shapes and sizes, making them hard to split or easy to crumble.
- Capsules and time-released medications are not safe to split. If you try to cut this type of pill, you could absorb a whole day's dose of medicine at once instead of over time.

It is always best to ask your doctor before trying to save money on medication. A doctor can offer safe, low cost alternatives to keep you and your finances healthy.

Information gathered from

U.S. Food and Drug Administration

[www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/](http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/BuyingUsingMedicineSafely/EnsuringSafeUseofMedicine/ucm184666.htm)

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Keeping Children Safe from Medications

Every year, over 60,000 children are taken to emergency rooms due to taking medications or vitamins prescribed to a parent or caregiver. All medications and vitamins should be stored out of the reach of children and out of sight.

Medication Safety Tips

- Store medications and vitamins out of sight and up high out of the reach of children.

- Put medicines away after each use and make it a habit. Never leave medications near a child, even if the medication is for the child.
- Use safety caps correctly. Click the cap into the locked position after each use.
- Educate your children about medications and why you take them. Do not tell children medication is candy in order to get them to take it.
- Remind guests to keep their medications, bags, luggage and purses away from a child's reach.
- Be prepared. If a child has accidentally taken a medication or vitamin, call the poison control center immediately at 800-222-1222.

Information gathered from Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov



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