



gerontology
A. Jolayne Farrell

Flu shots advisable for chronically ill

Dear Jo: What do you think about older persons getting flu shots? Also, can a person be immunized against pneumonia?
George O.

Influenza occurs almost every year during the winter months. We are very fortunate to be living at a time when such illnesses can be prevented or lessened through immunization. So, to answer your question, yes, I think that immunization against the flu in older persons is an excellent idea. The best time for this is now. People who are at greatest risk to the flu are those who suffer from a chronic disease, such as heart and lung disease and diabetes. The decision to immunize is the responsibility of your doctor so discuss it with him as he knows your condition the best. The immunization shot can be given in his office. There is an immunization against pneumonia that is also recommended for certain persons with chronic diseases and to those older than 65 who are particularly subject to pneumonia. Again, this is a medical decision. Routine immunization for healthy adults against pneumonia is not recommended.

Dear Jo: What are the leading causes of death among the aged?
J.K.

The greatest number of deaths (80 percent) in persons older than 65 can be placed into three categories. Most deaths are from heart and circulatory diseases, followed by cancer and deaths from accidents. The rates are high for men in all categories. Blacks suffer from a rate of heart and circulatory disease that is twice as high as the incidence among whites.



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