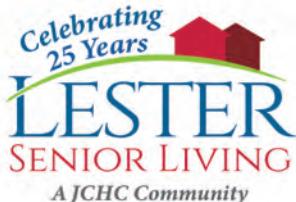


Senior Connections

January 22, 2026

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Echoes-Sentinel, Hunterdon Review,
West Morris Reporter, Madison Eagle,
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SENIOR CONNECTIONS

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"The first thing we try to do is to make it easy for people to get their repairs done. We know that it's not an easy thing to do to drop off your car and be without it," says owner Bob Arlotta. "Our main priority is to make it easy for people to get their repairs done. We try to make it as pain free as it can be."

Whether it's picking up or dropping off a vehicle at an owner's home, or giving customers a lift to their destination, Arlotta says the shop's success owes much to its long time commitment to its customers. The shop stays open 12 hours per day, six days a week, in an effort to give customers as much scheduling flexibility as possible.

And great customer service is just the starting point. In the past, the auto repair industry focused mainly on mechanics who were well-versed in mechanical issues, such

as brakes and tires. But as automobiles became increasingly reliant on electronics, computers and technology, Long Hill Auto has made a commitment to staying up to date on the latest technology and information, with mandatory monthly training sessions for all its employees.

The shop's focus on its surrounding community has also helped to establish its reputation as a friendly and reliable business.

Long Hill Auto sponsors and participates in many community events and activities, including acting as a food collection site for the Shrine of St. Joseph Food Drive and a variety of other Long Hill Chamber of Commerce events and programs. The business is very involved in Millington Downtown Day donating its facility electricity, water and parking lot space for the popular annual community gathering.

In the past, the business has also hosted local Girl Scouts working towards earning their Car Care Badges. Shop employees taught the girls how to change a tire, fix a flat,



jump start a dead car battery and more.

A free air pump and free car vacuum are available in front of the shop for anyone who needs them. In addition, smart car drivers running low on a charge can pull up and plug in at no cost. "We try to please everybody as

much as we can. I think that goes a long way" Arlotta said.

Long Hill Auto Service Center is located at 1905 Long Hill Road, in Millington. Reach them at longhillauto@aol.com or (908) 647-7984 or visit longhillautonj.com



VNA SUPPORTS FAMILY CAREGIVERS

The following content was contributed by the Visiting Nurse Association of Northern New Jersey.

Caring for an elderly parent, spouse or another loved one is an act of devotion that can be rewarding and strengthen family bonds. However, it's not without sacrifices. In fact, family caregivers are at heightened risk of experiencing frustration, isolation, physical exhaustion, and mental burnout. According to the AARP and the National Council on Aging:

- 50% of caregivers feel stressed and 34% say they can never relax
- 67% have difficulty balancing employment and caregiving so they change jobs, reduce work hours, decline promotions or temporarily stop working
- 80% of all caregivers do household chores for their elderly loved one
- Family caregivers spend an average of \$7,000 annually on costs associated with that role

If you're responsible for an elderly family member and you're encountering any of

these challenges, you may be eligible for free or reduced cost assistance funded by grants from the NJ Department of Human Services, the Morris and Sussex County Boards of County Commissioners, and other sources. This personalized assistance may include:

- Home health aide visits that provide breaks from caregiving and help with household chores
- Short-term respite options such as adult day care or a custodial facility stay for your loved one
- Reimbursement for specific goods or services that make caregiving less stressful and improve your loved one's quality of life

Grants are subject to the availability of funding, and varied eligibility requirements apply. VNA also offers affordable private pay home health aides with flexible scheduling a few hours per week, full-time or on a live-in basis.

For more information, request a free, no obligation consultation at vnannj.org or call 1 800-WE VISIT (1-800-938-4748).



If you're caring for a parent or another elderly loved one, you may qualify for free or reduced-cost help under programs with varied eligibility requirements.

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SMARTER PAIN SOLUTIONS

YOU decide before THEY prescribe

The following content was contributed by CiC for Prevention and Recovery

You've probably been in pain at one point or another. Maybe you've had a headache or bruise - pain that doesn't last long. But many active adults have ongoing pain from health problems such as arthritis, diabetes, shingles, or cancer. Pain can be your body's way of warning you that something is wrong.

Managing Pain Safely

Prescription pain medication, including opioids, are sometimes used for moderate to severe pain, but they must be used carefully.

When taken long-term or mixed with alcohol or certain medications, they carry risks such as dependence, constipation, confusion, and increased sensitivity to pain.

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like aspirin, naproxen, and ibuprofen can be effective alternatives and do not carry the same risk of addiction.

Options Beyond Medication

Many older adults find the best relief by combining medication with

other approaches. Talk with your doctor about options such as physical therapy, chiropractic care, acupuncture, massage, and mind-body practices like yoga or mindfulness.

Healthy habits also play an important role. Getting enough sleep and limiting tobacco, caffeine, and alcohol can help reduce pain and improve daily comfort.

Visit us online for more information: www.communityincrisis.org



**Do you live with pain? Do you take opioids?
They can be helpful but, for many, the risks
outweigh the benefits.**



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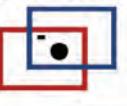
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INCAPACITY PLANNING

The following content was contributed by Margaret Schlesinger.

Incapacity planning is one of the most important—but most overlooked—parts of a person's estate plan. While many people focus on what happens to their assets after death, incapacity planning addresses a far more immediate risk: what happens if you are alive but unable to make decisions for yourself?

Incapacity planning determines who can step in to make financial and medical decisions for you and how your affairs will be managed if you cannot care for yourself. Incapacity can be temporary or permanent and may result from illness, an accident, or conditions such as dementia. Without proper planning, even a short period of incapacity can create serious legal and financial consequences for you and your family.

A solid estate plan includes, at a minimum, the following incapacity documents:

- Durable Power of Attorney – authorizes a trusted person to manage your financial and legal affairs
- Health Care Power of Attorney – appoints someone to make medical decisions on your behalf
- HIPAA Authorization – allows your agents and loved ones to receive medical information
- Advance Directive to Physicians (Living Will) – expresses your wishes regarding end-of-life care

Together, these documents ensure that the people you choose—not a court—are empowered to help you if you become incapacitated. What begins as a medical crisis can quickly turn into a financial one.

If someone becomes incapacitated without a valid financial power of attorney, no one automatically has the legal authority to act on their behalf—even a spouse or adult child. As a result, bills may go unpaid, mortgages and car loans can fall into default, homes or vehicles may be repossessed, income taxes may go unfiled triggering penalties and interest, and investment accounts may be frozen.

If an individual becomes ill without a valid health care power of attorney, a spouse or close family member may be able to make emergency medical decisions. However, they may not have legal authority to make non-emergency or long-term decisions, such as selecting long-term care or rehabilitation facilities, approving changes in treatment plans, and making end-of-life decisions. This lack of authority can cause delays, disputes, and unnecessary stress at an already difficult time.

When no valid powers of attorney exist and incapacity occurs, families are often forced to petition the court for legal guardianship. Guardianship is public, expensive, and cumbersome. In many cases, guardianship could have been avoided entirely with proper incapacity planning.

A good rule of thumb is to review and update your documents every ten years, or sooner if you experience a major life event. Your documents should clearly name a primary agent and one or more successor agents to ensure continuity without court involvement if your first choice cannot serve.

Incapacity planning protects your independence, your finances, and your loved ones. By putting the right documents in place—and keeping them up to date—you reduce the risk of delay, conflict, and court intervention, ensuring that your wishes are honored when you need help the most.

Margaret Schlesinger is a solo estate planning attorney in Madison, New Jersey. www.schlesingerestates.com.

Margaret K. Schlesinger, JD, MBA

- Incapacity Planning
- Estate Planning
- Estate Settlement

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140 new independent living residences will be added to Heath Village's West Campus, located directly across the street from the existing community.

IMAGINING WHAT'S NEXT: EXPANDING THE HEATH VILLAGE LIFESTYLE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

The following content was contributed by Heath Village.

Heat Village has long been recognized as a place where retirement living is defined by choice, connection, and a genuine sense of community. With a deep commitment to enhancing the lives of older adults while remaining rooted in the region it serves, Heath Village is proud to announce an exciting new chapter: a significant independent living expansion that will thoughtfully grow both the campus and its impact on the greater Hackettstown and Washington Township community.

The expansion will introduce 140 new independent living residences to Heath Village's West Campus, located directly across the street from the existing community. These new homes will include 84 beautifully designed apartment residences and 56 spacious villas, offering a range of floor plans, styles, and views to meet the diverse preferences of today's active older adults. Every detail of the expansion has been carefully considered to complement the natural beauty of the surrounding landscape while seamlessly extending the warm, welcoming atmosphere that has defined Heath Village for decades.

At the heart of the West Campus will be a stunning new 24,000-square-foot clubhouse, designed to serve as a vibrant hub for connection, wellness, and

lifelong learning. This spacious gathering space will feature a state-of-the-art fitness studio, an inspiring art studio, a welcoming pub, a full-service restaurant, and additional spaces for social events, clubs, and educational programs. Together, these amenities will enhance and expand upon Heath Village's already impressive offerings, which include multiple dining venues, a pub, a heated saltwater pool, scenic walking paths, gardens, green spaces, and a full calendar of engaging activities.

"This expansion is incredibly exciting for all of us," says Christina McLaughlin, Director of Sales at Heath Village. "We're not just adding residences—we're creating new opportunities for connection, wellness, and choice. It's energizing to see this vision come to life and to know how many future residents will be able to enjoy everything Heath Village has to offer from day one."

Beyond the benefits for future residents, the expansion represents a meaningful investment in the local community.

Mary Ellen Bove, Executive Director and CEO of Heath Village, emphasizes the broader vision behind the expansion. "This project reflects our long-term commitment to both our residents and the surrounding community," Bove shares. "As Heath Village grows, we are focused on doing

so thoughtfully—enhancing the quality of life for older adults while creating jobs, supporting the local economy, and remaining a positive, engaged presence in Hackettstown and Washington Township." The project is expected to create a wide range of new employment opportunities, both during construction and once the West Campus is fully operational. From skilled trades and construction professionals to hospitality, dining, maintenance, wellness, and administrative roles, the expansion will support job growth and economic vitality in Hackettstown and Washington Township. These new positions will further strengthen Heath Village's role as a valued local employer and community partner.

The presence of a thriving, expanding senior living community also brings broader benefits to the area. Heath Village residents actively support local businesses, cultural organizations, healthcare providers, and service professionals, contributing to the economic and social fabric of the region. The West Campus expansion will enhance this positive impact, welcoming new residents who are eager to engage with the surrounding community while enjoying the security, convenience, and lifestyle that Heath Village provides.

A key component of the expansion is the Heath Club, an exclusive opportunity for those interested in being among the first to call the West Campus home.

Heath Club members enjoy a number of distinct advantages, including first choice of residences, preferred floor plans, and coveted views. Membership also provides access to pre-construction pricing, offering exceptional value and peace of mind for those planning ahead. In addition, Heath Club members receive invitations to special events and previews designed to keep them closely connected to the progress of the expansion and to one another.

For many, the Heath Club represents more than early access—it's an invitation to become part of the community before the doors even open. Members have the opportunity to build relationships, stay informed, and feel confident knowing they will have priority when it comes time to select their future home.

As Heath Village looks toward the future, the expansion reflects its enduring mission: to provide exceptional senior living while remaining a positive, engaged presence in the broader community. With new residences, expanded amenities, job creation, and the continued growth of the Heath Club, Heath Village is poised to offer even more opportunities for residents to live well, stay connected, and thrive.

This next chapter is not simply about growth, it's about thoughtfully extending a legacy of quality, care, and community that has made Heath Village a trusted name in retirement living for generations.



We're Growing!



Discover What's Next at Heath Village

A new neighborhood is taking shape at Heath Village—56 villas and 84 apartments nestled on 90 acres of natural beauty, with sweeping meadows, gardens, and walking trails just outside your door.

Anchoring it all will be a 24,000-square-foot clubhouse with a fitness studio, restaurant, bar, and inviting spaces to gather, relax, and connect. It's the same trusted Heath Village experience—reimagined for the future.

Call now to learn more about this exciting new neighborhood and upcoming opportunities.

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JCHC AND LESTER SENIOR LIVING: ENHANCING LIVES THROUGH COMMUNITY, CARE, AND COMPASSION

The following content was contributed by The Jewish Community Housing Corporation.

The Jewish Community Housing Corporation (JCHC), a faith-based nonprofit organization headquartered in Livingston, is dedicated to serving older adults through high-quality, affordable housing and supportive services. With more than four decades of experience, JCHC has earned a strong reputation in senior care throughout Essex and Morris counties. The organization offers a range of living options designed to meet varying needs and income levels, including subsidized housing, market-rate apartments, independent living, assisted living, and memory care.

Lester Senior Living in Whippany, NJ, one of JCHC's flagship communities, was proudly voted Best of Essex for Senior Care in both 2024 and 2025, recognizing its continued excellence in senior living. Set on a beautifully maintained suburban campus, Lester offers residents scenic walking trails, landscaped grounds, and peaceful outdoor spaces that encourage movement, relaxation, and connection with nature. The community is known for its engaging lifestyle programming, attentive and compassionate staff, and strong sense of belonging. Residents receive personalized support, whether they live independently or require assistance with daily living.

Rooted in Jewish values, Lester Senior Living provides a welcoming and inclusive environment for in-

dividuals of all backgrounds. Residents enjoy chef-prepared kosher meals, wellness and fitness programs, spiritual services, cultural events, and round-the-clock security. The community's mission is to foster connection, purpose, and peace of mind for both residents and their families.

JCHC remains committed to growing and adapting to the evolving needs of today's seniors, continually enhancing its programs and services with a focus on dignity, independence, and quality of life. Through meaningful community engagement, JCHC truly "cares for those who once cared for us."

To learn more about Lester Senior Living for you or a loved one, or to support the work of JCHC, visit www.jchcorp.org.

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FIVE ADVANCES IN ALZHEIMER'S CARE AND TREATMENT IN 2025

For the millions of Americans touched by Alzheimer's disease, 2025 brought major advances in understanding of brain health and progress in diagnosis and treatment. Here are the year's biggest advances, along with how you can take action with this knowledge in 2026:

1) A Structured Plan Can Sharpen Brain Health

In a major U.S. clinical trial of older adults at risk for cognitive decline, two healthy lifestyle plans in the Alzheimer's Association's U.S. POINTER study improved memory and thinking skills over two years. Both interventions included exercise, brain-healthy nutrition, cognitive training and heart health monitoring. However, participants in a highly structured program that also included regular coaching and peer support showed significantly greater brain health gains, demonstrating that when brain-healthy habits are organized and supported, people stick with them and thinking skills benefit.

Next steps for families: Start small but structured: aim for 150 minutes of weekly exercise of at least moderate intensity, Mediterranean-style meals, 7-8 hours of sleep per night, and 2-3 short brain-training sessions each week. Put goals on a shared calendar, find an exercise or brain-health buddy, and schedule regular check-ins with your clinician or healthcare professional.

2) Simple Blood Tests Can Help Spot Changes Earlier

In 2025, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) cleared two blood tests that detect Alzheimer's-related brain changes, offering a less invasive, less expensive option for those experiencing memory changes to support diagnosis and potentially reduce the need for PET scans or spinal taps. Blood tests are not stand-alone diagnostic tools, but their use can help guide next steps for testing, treatment and planning. The Alzheimer's Association has developed clinical guidelines to help specialists determine when to use blood tests alongside established "gold standard" tests and clinical judgment.

Next step for families: Ask your health care team whether an Alzheimer's blood test makes sense for you or a loved one, and how your results would affect lifestyle and health care plans. If they recommend testing, ask them to refer you to a specialist who can explain the results and next steps.

3) Americans Want To Know And Act Sooner

A recent Alzheimer's Association national survey of adults 45 and older found most want to learn early if they have Alzheimer's before symptoms impact their lives, and 9 out of 10 would take a simple test, if available, to clarify next steps. Nearly 3 in 5 respondents



Photo Courtesy of DisobeyArt/iStock via Getty Images Plus

Major advances in the understanding of brain health and progress in diagnosis and treatment were made in 2025.

said they would accept a moderate or high level of risk to take medication that could slow the disease's progression.

Early awareness unlocks time to live healthfully, organize support, consider treatment options, and plan finances and care preferences.

Next step for families: Bring your top concerns, what's changed (memory, mood, function), and goals for the next three months to your next appointment.

4) Treatment Can Be Easier To Take

The August 2025 FDA approval of Leqembi for delivery via weekly subcutaneous injections may ease treatment for some patients. Those who complete initial infusion treatments as directed for 18 months can now receive their subsequent weekly treatment using at-home autoinjectors.

Fewer infusion clinic visits can mean less travel and lower caregiver burden, making it easier to stick to treatments for eligible patients. Decisions depend on eligibility, monitoring requirements, side-effect profile, and your clinician's judgment.

The Alzheimer's Association encourages clinician participation in ALZ-NET, a nationwide program collecting real-world data on Alzheimer's treatments.

Next step for families: If treatment is on the table, ask whether at-home injections might be an option after the initial phase, and what monitoring you'd still need.

5) A New Clinician Hub Helps Care Teams Stay Current

When clinicians have fast access to evidence-based resources, patients get clearer answers and more consistent care. The new centralized professional portal, ALZPro, launched by the Alzheimer's Association, now curates practice guidelines, professional training, and point-of-care tools for earlier detection, appropriate test use, treatment eligibility and safety monitoring.

Next step for families: Let your health care professional know that the Alzheimer's Association has new research, training and support materials for professionals.

For information, support, research and public policy, visit The Alzheimer's Association at alz.org or call 800.272.3900.

From new diagnostic tools and treatments to proven lifestyle plans, major advances in Alzheimer's in 2025 can change how you manage the disease in 2026.

Editor's note: This article was contributed by StatePoint

BE ALERT To SCAMMERS WHILE TRAVELING

Travelers are a key target for scammers, and criminals are looking to cash in on you being distracted. Visa has observed an uptick in 2025 of sophisticated, travel-related scams where well-known travel providers are convincingly impersonated, and, according to a McAfee Travel Report, one in five Americans has fallen victim to a travel scam.

Artificial intelligence has made it easier to be duped by fake websites, calls, email and texts. Even just ordering car service can open you up to being scammed by impersonators that may contact you directly through an otherwise trusted app.

Here are scams to watch for while traveling:

- **Fake QR Codes.** Scammers will replace real QR codes with fake ones to redirect your phone to a malicious website.
- **Juice Jacking.** If you plug a phone or

laptop into a public charging station, hackers can potentially compromise the outlet to transfer malware to or steal data from a connected device.

- **Hacked Luggage.** Smart luggage with built-in USB chargers, GPS tracking and digital locks can be hacked. Scammers can locate your bags and unlock them remotely.

Maintain Vigilance

Maintaining vigilance is the best way to avoid trouble while traveling, but here are some additional preventative measures you can take:

- **Apply Scrutiny.** Be suspicious of anyone emailing, calling, messaging or approaching you in person, possibly in a company uniform, claiming to need your personal information.

- **Take Control.** Keep your personal information, payment cards and devices with you under your control.

- **Verify Contact.** Before responding to an email, call, text or voice message, disconnect and research contact information to verify legitimacy.

- **Look for Tampering.** Be leery of QR codes that appear to be affixed by a sticker. Also watch for skimming devices on gas pumps by jiggling them. If there is any movement, don't insert your card.

- **Check Websites.** If you scan a QR code, a web link will appear. Review it carefully for anomalies and type in a legitimate website address rather than clicking the link.

- **Charge Cautiously.** Use your own charging adapter and cable instead of public

USB ports.

- **Secure Devices.** Keep Bluetooth and Wi-Fi turned off on all devices – even smart luggage – when not in use. When using the internet, opt to connect through data roaming rather than public Wi-Fi and use a VPN whenever possible.

- **Wait to Post.** Don't post your travel photos showing you are away from home until you return.

For more information on best practices to help prevent fraud, visit PNC's Security and Privacy Center.

By taking the necessary precautions, you can help protect yourself and make your trip a time of good relaxation rather than crisis.

Editor's note: This article was contributed by StatePoint.

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FIVE WAYS TO EASE YOUR RETIREMENT WORRIES

By ROB WILLIAMS

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

There are a lot of cautionary tales in the news these days about how unprepared people are for retirement, painting a rather bleak picture of widespread financial insecurity. But the reality is quite different.

We recently surveyed more than 1,000 Americans and found they actually feel pretty optimistic about their retirement plans. Six in 10 people say they are not concerned about having enough money to live off of in retirement, and most also feel financially prepared. The numbers are even better for people who are already retired or semi-retired. Over 90% say they've saved enough to live comfortably and are confident about their overall financial situation.

None of this means people aren't worried at all. What we found is that most retirement anxiety centers around things beyond people's control, like inflation, market fluctuations, rising health care costs and potential changes in government policy. If you fall into that category, here are five practical strategies to help ease those concerns and provide greater peace of mind.

1. Make Sure Your Portfolio Reflects Your Current Risk Capacity

While "risk tolerance" refers to the amount of market volatility you can stomach, "risk capacity" is about determining how much money you'll definitely need over the next one to four years. Think of it as the financial buffer required to cover your short-term expenses without being affected by market and economic swings. Once you know your risk capacity, set aside the appropriate cash and split it into two types of cushions:

- Money you know you'll need in the next year - Consider putting this into high-yield checking or savings accounts, money market funds, or CDs with maturities under 12 months.

- Money you'll need in the next two to four years - Consider putting this into high-quality short-term bonds, bond



Retirement is a major life change, and even if you're generally confident about your retirement savings,

funds, or CDs with maturities between two to four years.

2. Stay Invested And Diversified

A diversified portfolio could potentially help navigate the ups and downs of the economy. And spreading your investments across various asset classes - like stocks, bonds and real estate - may create a cushion against market volatility. Stocks, in particular, have historically outpaced inflation over the long term, helping to preserve your purchasing power. Overall, staying invested through market cycles rather than reacting to short-term fluctuations can be one of the best strategies for maintaining your wealth in retirement.

3. Revisit Your Emergency Fund

An emergency fund is crucial at any stage of life, but it becomes especially vital in retirement when income is often more fixed. In addition to your cash cushions, aim to keep enough in your emergency fund to cover about a year's worth of expenses, minus any guaranteed in-

come from sources like Social Security or pensions. A high-yield checking or money market account can be a great place to store these funds, allowing for easy access in an emergency without penalties or delays.

4. Plan For Long-Term Care Costs

One of retirees' biggest worries is the potential cost of health care, especially longterm care. To prepare, start by answering three fundamental questions:

- Who will provide care if needed?
- Where do you want that care to be provided?
- How will you pay for it?

From there, consider consulting with a financial planner to explore options that align with your needs. This might include long-term care insurance or other strategies to ensure your assets are protected. Addressing these concerns proactively can reduce stress about unexpected health costs in the future.

5. Keep Perspective On Changes In Washington

Political shifts, such as a new administration or changes in Congress, can create anxiety about taxes, Medicare, Social Security and the markets. However, it's important to remember that market movements are more often driven by corporate earnings, economic data and central bank policies than by political changes.

Additionally, there's usually a significant gap between campaign promises and actual policy changes. Legislative processes are slow and often result in watered-down versions of initial proposals, so avoid jumping to conclusions based on political rhetoric.

Stick to your long-term investing plan and avoid making emotional decisions based on the latest headlines.

Retirement is a major life change, and even if you're generally confident about your retirement savings, it is normal to be anxious about factors outside of your control.

If you're feeling that, you're not alone. And although you can't control inflation or the markets, health care costs, or the economy in general, there are steps you can take to regain a sense of control.

For more information, visit Schwab.com/retirement for a wide range of resources and help.

Disclosures

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WHAT TO KNOW DURING RESPIRATORY VIRUS SEASON

As temperatures drop and people spend more time indoors, the flu and other respiratory viruses can spread easily. Fortunately, you can take precautions to protect yourself, your family and your community.

The American Medical Association (AMA) recommends that all eligible Americans -- everyone 6 months and older (with rare exceptions) -- get vaccinated against flu as soon as possible. While the timing, intensity and severity of each flu season is difficult to predict, vaccination is always the best way to reduce your risk of severe illness from flu -- and the best way to protect your loved ones and community by slowing its spread. Flu vaccination also reduces missed days of work and school, prevents added medical costs, and has even been associated with lower rates of cardiac events among people with heart disease.

Based on preliminary data, the CDC estimates that getting vaccinated against flu reduced the risk of hospitalization due to flu by about 40% in adults and 50-60% in children during last year's flu season. However, fewer than half of all people nationwide received a flu vaccine last season.

"Last year's flu season was one of the worst in the United States in 15 years, and the statistics speak volumes. The low vaccination numbers resulted in more than 620,000 hospitalizations and 27,000 deaths related to flu illness," said AMA president, Bobby Mukkamala, M.D. "We cannot afford to repeat this pattern. We strongly urge everyone who is eligible to get a flu vaccine as soon as possible, ideally before illness begins spreading wide-



Photo Courtesy of dragana991/iStock via Getty Images Plus

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ly."

In addition to flu, other respiratory viruses with potentially serious complications are expected to circulate again this year, including respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and SARS-CoV-2.

The AMA encourages all adults age 75 and older to get vaccinated against RSV, as well as adults ages 50-74 with certain medical conditions who are at increased risk for severe RSV. The RSV vaccine is not an annual vaccine,

so those who have already received it do not need another dose. Families should also familiarize themselves with the options to protect infants during RSV season, including vaccination during pregnancy or an RSV monoclonal antibody for infants and young children. Most infants will not need both options.

Anyone 6 months and older who wants a COVID-19 vaccine should be able to get one. Certain populations are at increased risk of severe outcomes from COVID-19, including adults age 65 and older, those with underlying medical conditions, patients who are pregnant, and children 6 to 23 months of age.

The AMA encourages you to speak with your physician or other health care professional to determine which vaccines are best for you, and to call your doctor or pharmacy to make an appointment for flu and other shots. AMA recently launched infographics to help patients and physicians cut through vaccine confusion and have open, honest conversations with each other. The infographics can be found at <https://ama-assn.org>.

Additional health precautions, such as covering coughs and sneezes, frequently washing your hands, improving indoor air quality, and staying home when you're sick, can also help reduce the spread of viruses. This respiratory virus season, take these steps and get up to date on vaccinations to stay healthy and protect those around you.

Editor's note: This article was contributed by StatePoint.

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