

Health Insights

August 2022

Flu and Pneumonia Vaccinations Tied to Lower Risk of Alzheimer's Dementia

According to research reported at the Alzheimer's Association International Conference® (AAIC®), influenza and pneumonia vaccinations are associated with a reduced risk of Alzheimer's disease. Having at least one flu vaccination was associated with a 17% reduction in Alzheimer's incidence, and having more frequent flu vaccinations was associated with an additional 13% reduction. Pneumonia vaccination between ages 65 and 75 was also shown to reduce Alzheimer's risk by up to 40%, depending on individual genes. Individuals with dementia are more likely to die from infections than those without dementia.

"With the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccines are at the forefront of public health discussions. It is important to explore their benefit in not only protecting against viral or bacterial infection but also improving long-term health outcomes," said Maria C. Carrillo, Ph.D., Alzheimer's Association chief science officer. "This research, while early, calls for further studies in large, diverse clinical trials to inform whether vaccinations as a public health strategy decrease our risk for developing dementia as we age."

Previous research suggested vaccinations may have a protective factor against cognitive decline, but there have been no large, comprehensive studies focused on the influenza (flu) vaccine and Alzheimer's disease risk, specifically. Albert Amran, a medical student at The University of Texas, and his team investigated an extensive American health record dataset. They found that having one flu vaccination was associated with a lower prevalence of Alzheimer's, and among vaccinated patients receiving the flu vaccine more frequently was associated with an even lower prevalence of Alzheimer's.

The results translated to an almost 6% reduction risk of Alzheimer's disease for patients between 75 - 84, for 16 years. The researchers found the protective association between the flu vaccine and the risk of Alzheimer's was strongest for those who received their first vaccine at a younger age. For example, those who received their first documented flu shot at age 60 benefitted more than those who received their first flu shot at age 70. "Our study suggests that regular use of a very accessible and relatively cheap intervention the flu shot may significantly reduce risk of Alzheimer's dementia," Amran said.

Repurposing existing vaccines may be a promising approach to Alzheimer's disease prevention. Svetlana Ukraintseva, Ph.D., Associate Research Professor at Duke University, and team investigated associations between pneumococcal vaccination, with and without an accompanying seasonal flu shot, and the risk of Alzheimer's disease among 5,146 participants age 65+ from the Cardiovascular Health Study. The researchers found that a pneumococcal vaccination between ages 65 - 75 reduced the risk of developing Alzheimer's by 25 - 30% after considering other factors. The most significant reduction in the risk of Alzheimer's (up to 40%) was observed among people vaccinated against pneumonia who were non-carriers of the Alzheimer's risk gene. The total number of vaccinations against pneumonia and the flu between ages 65 and 75 was also associated with a lower risk of Alzheimer's.

Alzheimer's Association. "Flu, pneumonia vaccinations tied to lower risk of Alzheimer's dementia." ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 27 July 2020.
www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/07/200727114726.htm



Mental Health Moment

Seasonal Influenza

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. Those with the flu can spread it to others within six feet. The virus spreads through droplets created when people cough, sneeze, or talk. Once inhaled, these droplets can cause another person to become infected. People with the flu may experience symptoms such as:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Vomiting or diarrhea (more common in children than adults)

While most people recover from the flu and its associated symptoms, the flu can cause severe illness or death among high-risk groups, such as the very young, the elderly, pregnant women, health workers, and those with other serious medical conditions. Seasonal influenza can also impact businesses, schools, and communities through absenteeism, decreased productivity, and more. Here's what you can do to prepare for flu season and minimize the impact that the flu can have on you and your community:

- Consider getting vaccinated against flu.
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water (or use an alcohol-based sanitizer).
- Avoid contact with sick people.
- Consider teleworking when you feel ill and limit contact with others.
- Disinfect commonly touched objects, such as buttons, doorknobs, and keyboards.

For more information on influenza and how to protect yourself and others, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>

"Influenza (Flu)." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1 July 2022, <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>

Mindfulness: What is it, and how can it help me?

The concept of mindfulness is simple. The practice is about being completely aware of what is happening in the present of all that's going on inside you and happening around you. Mindfulness is not living your life on "autopilot." Becoming a more mindful person requires commitment and practice. Here are some tips to help you get started:

- **Take deep breaths.** Breathe in through your nose to a count of 4, hold for one second, and then exhale through your mouth to a count of 5. Repeat often.
- **Enjoy a stroll.** As you walk, notice your breath and the sights and sounds around you. As thoughts and worries enter your mind, acknowledge them, but then return your thoughts to the present.
- **Practice mindful eating.** Be aware of the taste, textures, and flavors in each bite, and listen to your body when you are feeling hungry or full.
- **Utilize mindfulness resources in your local community,** including yoga and meditation classes, mindfulness-based stress reduction programs, and books on the practice.

Being mindful and practicing meditation have been studied in many clinical trials. The overall evidence supports the effectiveness of meditation for various conditions, including:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Pain
- Depression
- Insomnia
- High blood pressure

Preliminary research indicates that meditation can also help people with asthma and fibromyalgia. Meditation and mindfulness exercises can help you experience thoughts and emotions with greater balance and acceptance. It can also help increase attention, decrease job burnout, improve sleep, and improve diabetes control.

"Mindfulness Exercises." Mayo Clinic, Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, 15 Sept. 2020, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/in-depth/mindfulness-exercises/art-20046356>.



Broccoli Salad

Ingredient List :

- 1 small head broccoli, chopped into bite-sized pieces
- 1/3 cup red onion, diced
- 1 cup red grapes, halved
- 1/4 cup raisins or dried cranberries
- 1/4 cup toasted pecans, roughly chopped
- 2 pieces of cooked bacon, crumbled
- 1/2 cup Greek Yogurt Coleslaw Dressing (to taste)

Instructions :

In a large bowl, combine broccoli, onion, grapes, raisins, pecans, and bacon. In a separate bowl, combine dressing ingredients. Pour dressing over salad. Stir to coat evenly, adding more dressing as needed. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Serves 6 - Calories Per Serving: 155kcal, Total Carbohydrates: 18.8g, Protein: 6.4g, Total Fat: 7.5g, Sodium: 101.9mg, Dietary Fiber: 3.7g, Sugar: 10.8g

McMordie, Kaleigh. "Healthy No-Mayo Broccoli Salad." Lively Table, 7 June 2021, <https://livelytable.com/broccoli-salad/>.



August Quiz

Influenza and Pneumonia Vaccinations Tied to Lower Risk of Alzheimer's Dementia

1. Vaccination against pneumonia between ages 65 and 75 _____ Alzheimer's risk by up to _____ depending on individual genes.
2. *True or False:* Getting the flue vaccine annually is associated with lower prevalence of Alzheimer's.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Seasonal Flu

3. How does the flu spread between people?
 - a. Through tiny droplets when people cough, sneeze, or talk
 - b. Through animal bites
 - c. Through chance
 - d. It's something you're born with
4. How can you protect yourself and others from seasonal flu?
 - a. Get vaccinated against flu
 - b. Avoid contact with healthy people
 - c. Telework when you feel sick
 - d. Both A & C

Mindfulness: What is it and how can it help me?

5. *Select all that Apply:* You can practice mindfulness by doing what?

<input type="checkbox"/> Taking deep breaths	<input type="checkbox"/> Practicing mindful eating
<input type="checkbox"/> Listening to heavy metal music	<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoying a stroll

See page 5 for quiz answers



Healthy Habits Calendar

August 2022 - Seasonal Influenza

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Welcome to August! Start the Go Green Challenge	2	3 Watermelon Wednesday: Eat some watermelon or another healthy food	4	5 Friendly Friday: Introduce yourself to someone new at work	6 Tisha B'Av begins
7 Tisha B'Av ends Self-care Sunday: Set out your clothes for tomorrow	8 Ashura	9 Teaser Tuesday: Do trivia and brain teasers for 30 minutes	10	11 Therapy Thursday: Practice mindfulness for 15 minutes	12	13 Social Saturday: Find an event in your community and attend it
14	15 Money Monday: Check on your budget or start a budget	16	17 National Nonprofit Day: Consider donating to your favorite non-profit	18	19 Challenge Check-in: What vegetables have you added to your diet this month?	20
21 Senior Sunday: Visit with grandparents or other elderly community members	22	23 Teeth Tuesday: Don't forget to floss and schedule your next dental exam	24	25 Thankful Thursday: Write down 15 things you're thankful for	26	27 Social Saturday: Do something physically active with friends
28 Self-care Sunday: Start reading a new book	29	30 Challenge Check-in: Did you try a new fruit or vegetable this month?	31 Workout Wednesday: Try doing 10 pushups and a 30 second forearm plank			



Challenge: Go Green

30 Day Challenge:

Take control of your health with this month's Go Green Challenge! Eat 2 - 3 cups of vegetables per day, 5 days each week. Below are some ideas for how to incorporate more vegetables into your regular meals.

- Include vegetables in your main dish (e.g., on your pizza, in a sandwich, etc.)
- Add green vegetables to your smoothies
- Puree vegetables into your pasta sauce
- Prepare vegetables to snack on during the day
- Replace your pasta with vegetable noodles made of squash, zucchinis, sweet potatoes, or carrots
- Use lettuce in wraps or in place of a bun
- Load up your soup with a variety of veggies
- Add vegetables to your breakfasts (e.g., veggie omelet, quiche, etc.)
- Use cauliflower substitutes for rice or crust
- Throw some veggie kebobs on the grill alongside your chicken or steak

Week 1

What vegetables did you eat?

Day 1	
Day 2	
Day 3	
Day 4	
Day 5	

Week 2

What vegetables did you eat?

Day 1	
Day 2	
Day 3	
Day 4	
Day 5	

Week 3

What vegetables did you eat?

Day 1	
Day 2	
Day 3	
Day 4	
Day 5	

Week 4

What vegetables did you eat?

Day 1	
Day 2	
Day 3	
Day 4	
Day 5	

Answers to Quiz:

Q1: Reduced & 40% | Q2: True

Q3: a. Through tiny droplets when people cough, sneeze, or talk

Q4: d. Both A & B | Q5: Taking deep breaths / Enjoying a Stroll / Practicing mindful eating