

3 Healthy Eating for Older Adults

6 Exercise and Seniors



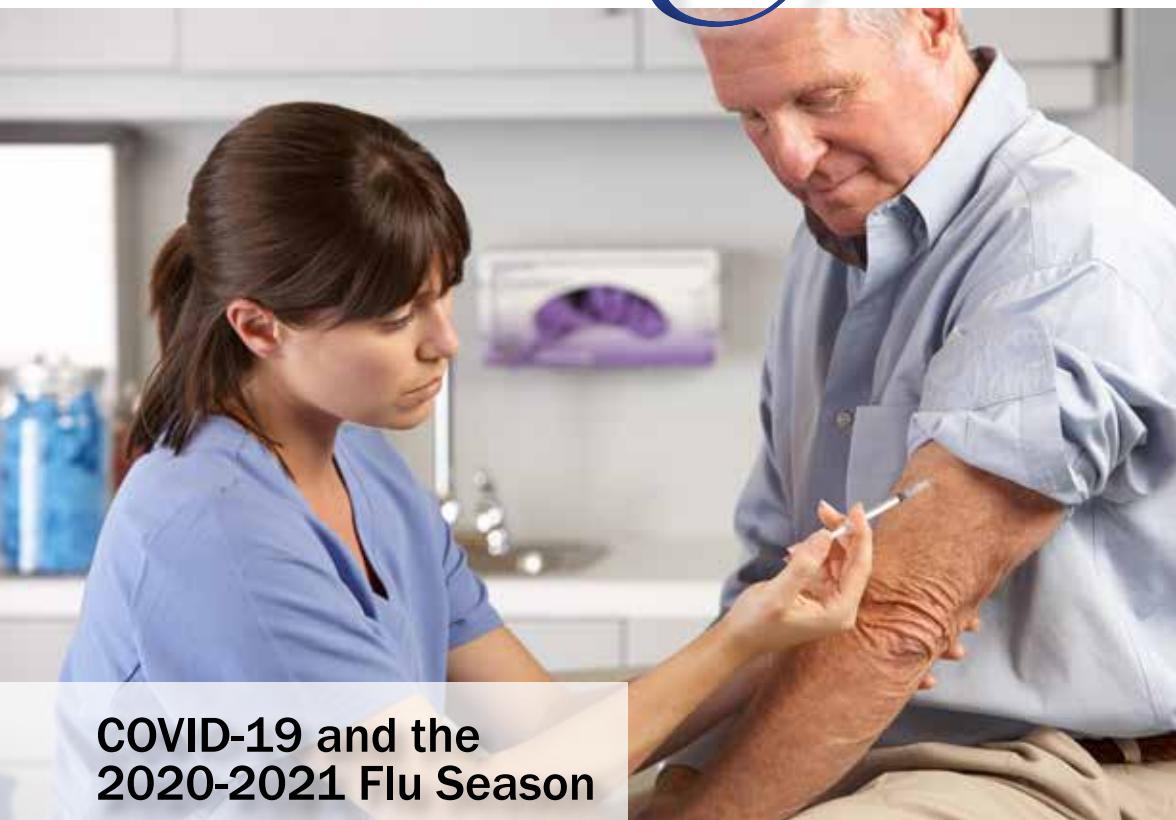
living

INDEPENDENT

www.independentyou.net
703-999-3006

The Newsletter of **INDEPENDENT YOU** Senior Services

FALL 2020 Vol. 5 Issue 4



COVID-19 and the 2020-2021 Flu Season

Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, reducing the spread of respiratory illnesses like flu this fall and winter is more important than ever.

Flu vaccination is especially important for adults 65 years and older, who account for most hospitalizations and deaths from flu and from Covid-19.

Dr. Leslie Kernisan, a doctor specializing in geriatrics, says “So this year, more than ever, it’s important to do what you can to reduce respiratory illness, to protect yourself, and to protect others. We don’t yet have a COVID vaccine, but we do have influenza vaccines.”

To protect your health when getting a flu vaccine, follow the CDC’s Covid-19 recommendations for safety during doctor visits and running essential errands and also continue to take everyday preventive actions.

For more information, see the CDC’s information on getting a flu vaccine during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Getting a flu shot prevents severe illness in seniors

Older adults are one of the highest risk groups for flu, but getting a flu shot will significantly reduce the chance that

they'll get sick.

And if they do end up getting the flu, already having the flu vaccine makes it less severe and less likely to develop into dangerous complications.

5 reasons why flu vaccines are so important for seniors

1. Seniors and caregivers are at higher risk for flu

Cold and flu season is here again.

Two of the most at-risk populations are seniors and caregivers.

2. Flu is a serious health risk for seniors

For seniors, the flu can quickly develop into a severe illness and could cause death.

3. Getting the flu shot reduces flu risk and severity

Even if the flu vaccine isn't 100% effective, it's still worthwhile. Research shows that if someone who is vaccinated does get the flu, they will have a milder case. But seniors who got the flu shot reduced their risk of being hospitalized due to the flu by 40% and reduced the risk of being admitted to an intensive care unit with flu by 82%.

4. The flu vaccine is free under Medicare

If your older adult has Medicare, the flu shot is free as long as the provider accepts Medicare. There is no co-insurance or co-payment needed. And your older adult doesn't have to meet their deductible to get the vaccine.

5. Protect against deadly flu complications

A severe form of pneumonia is a common and deadly complication of the flu. In addition to the flu shot, people age 65 or older, smokers, and those with diabetes or lung problems should consider getting a pneumococcal vaccination.

When to get a flu shot

With flu and Covid-19 going around this year, the CDC recommends that everyone should get vaccinated in September or before the end of October – especially adults over age 65. After getting the shot, it takes about 2

weeks for the protective flu antibodies to develop in the body.

So, the sooner your older adult and you get the shot, the sooner you'll both have protection against the flu. But experts agree that getting the shot at any time is still much better than not getting it at all.

What type of vaccine is recommended for seniors?

The high-dose flu shot.

For the 2020-2021 flu season, adults over age 65 should get either the Fluzone High-Dose vaccine or the flu vaccine with adjuvant (brand name FLUAD).

Seniors need these special high-dose versions of the flu shot because their immune systems don't produce as strong an immune response after getting the regular-dose vaccine. That reduces the regular dose vaccine's effectiveness and puts them at higher risk for severe illness. The higher dose vaccines help older bodies produce a better immune response and increases their protection against the flu.

Where to get a flu shot: find a local clinic

Flu shots are now available in many convenient locations, like major drug stores, health clinics, and doctor's offices. That makes getting a flu shot quick and easy – most of these locations don't even require an appointment, you can walk in anytime. Use the Vaccine Finder to find flu shot clinics near you. Select the vaccine you're looking for, like "Flu Shot (65+)" and enter your zip code to see locations near you.

Vaccine availability can change, so call ahead to make sure they have the vaccine you need before going. There you'll be able to find out what's new for the 2020-2021 flu season, what types of vaccinations are available, and more.

Next Step Find a flu shot clinic at a location near you

By DailyCaring Editorial Team



Healthy Eating for Older Adults

Eating a variety of foods from all food groups can help supply the nutrients a person needs as they age. A healthy eating plan emphasizes fruit, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat or fat-free dairy; includes lean meat, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and nuts; and is low in saturated fats, trans fats, salt (sodium) and added sugars.

Eating right doesn't have to be complicated. Start with these recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans:

Eat fruits and vegetables. They can be fresh, frozen or canned. Eat more dark green vegetables such as leafy greens or broccoli, and orange vegetables such as carrots and sweet potatoes.

Vary protein choices with more fish, beans and peas.

Eat at least three ounces of whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice or pasta every day. Choose whole grains whenever possible.

Have three servings of low-fat or fat-free

dairy (milk, yogurt or cheese) that are fortified with vitamin D to help keep your bones healthy.

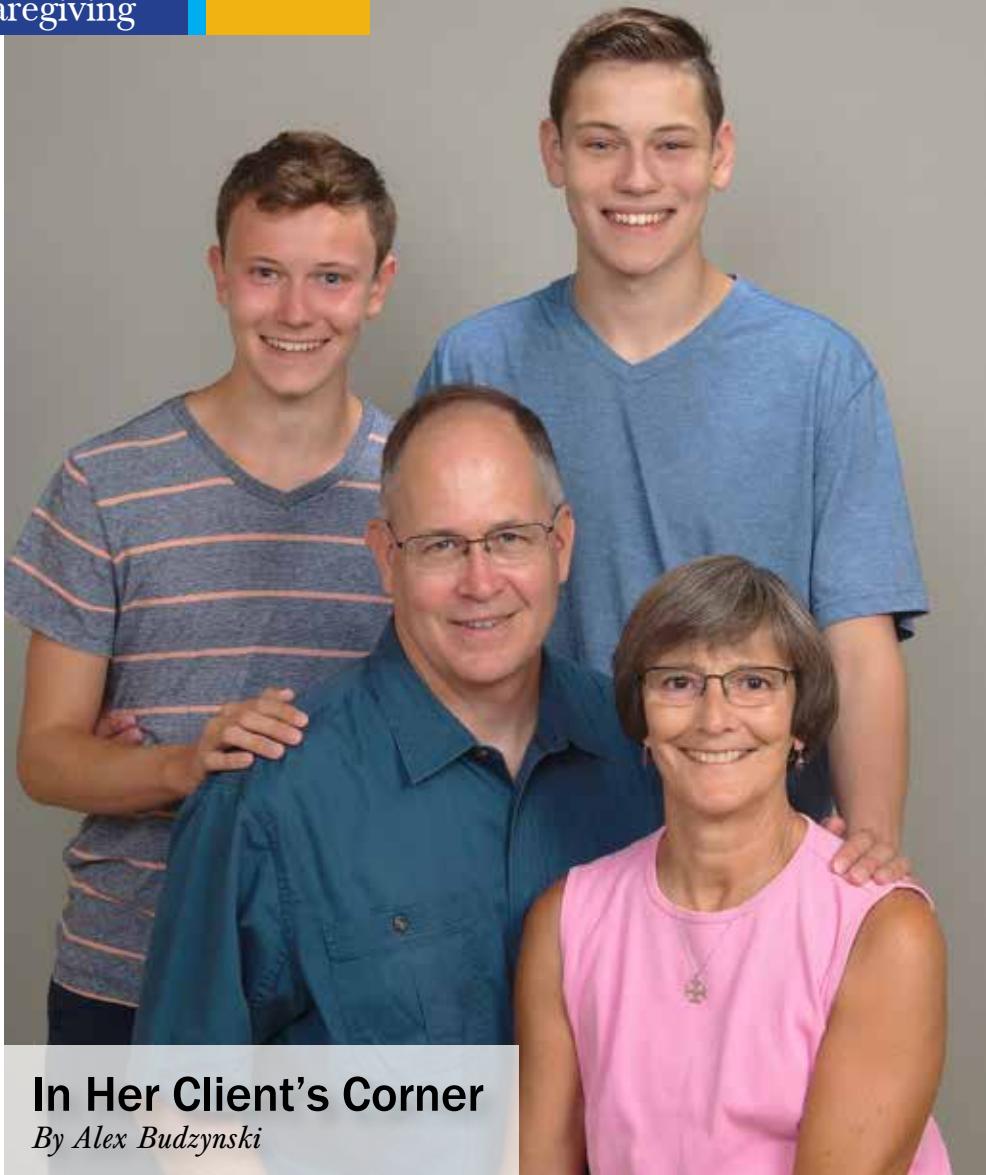
Make the fats you eat polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. Switch from solid fats to oils when preparing food.

Add Physical Activity

Balancing physical activity and a healthful diet is the best recipe for health and fitness. Set a goal to be physically active at least 30 minutes every day – this even can be broken into three 10-minute sessions throughout the day.

For someone who is currently inactive, it's a good idea to start with a few minutes of activity, such as walking, and gradually increase this time as they become stronger. And always check with a health-care provider before beginning a new physical activity program.

*Reviewed by Esther Ellis, MS, RDN, LDN
Published November 15, 2019*



In Her Client's Corner

By Alex Budzynski

With the screech of a whistle, a referee alerts the arena that the final play of the game is about to begin. Hordes of fans crowded in the stadium and watching at home on a flatscreen TV cheer at the top of their lungs, hoping that their team emerges victorious. As a mom, Kathy Budzynski is no stranger to the rally cry of a sporting event, as she's spent countless hours poolside cheering on her two sons at their swim meets. As an Aging Life Care Professional for Independent You, she spends every day rooting for those who have no one else in their corner.

Since she earned her Bachelor of Science Nursing degree from Rush University in Chicago, she has worked at hospitals, homeless shelters, and in

communal homes. With decades of experience working with physically and mentally disabled adults, taking care of others has always been a centerpiece to Kathy's life.

Today, her commitment to helping others has found a home at Independent You. As an Aging Life Care Professional, her daily tasks vary depending on each client's specific needs. On any given day, she will visit clients at their residence, buy them groceries, accompany them to a doctor's appointment, or even supervise their caregivers. In this array of responsibilities, her vigor for helping others remains steadfast.

"I'm hoping that any work that I do as a nurse is making a positive difference in a person's life," she remarked. "I try

to do what I think is best for that person and make their life better, whether that be socially, physically, cognitively, psychologically, etc.”

Kathy particularly enjoys her work as an Aging Life Care Professional because of the personal relationships she is able to foster with her clients.

“I like seeing them: I like being there interacting with them, finding out what’s going on with them, and (watching) them realize ‘Oh, she’s here she’s checking me,’” she explained.

As a self-proclaimed people-person with an affinity for chit-chat, the inability to regularly see some clients because of COVID-19 restrictions has uniquely impacted Kathy’s job.

“A fair number of my clients and our clients have really suffered health wise and cognitively because of COVID,” she said.

She particularly empathizes with clients who have dementia or another mental illness and must remain isolated to their room all day.

“They don’t understand why they can’t come out of their room... and they think people don’t want to come and see them anymore, but people with dementia don’t understand that there’s a pandemic,” she observed.

Equally disheartening are the clients who have died because of COVID-19 who she will never be able to see again.

While this moment presents particular challenges for health care workers, Kathy also faces certain obstacles when advocating for her clients in a virus-free world.

“A lot of people don’t have the money they need to get the care that they really need, so I can’t always get people what they need because it’s just not within my realm... ultimately, the client is the one who always suffers,” she said.

She specifically cites the virtues of

patience and perseverance as integral to her success with clients.

“I just have to be super positive and just believe in what I’m doing, like that (my work) is valuable,” she stated.

Despite these challenges, one of Kathy’s favorite aspects of Independent You is the culture of support. She feels as though her co-workers share a client-first, altruistic approach to their work, and thus is empowered to support for her clients.

“People with disabilities don’t have a lot of support to begin with, and then when they get older, they have no support,” she commented.

“I feel like I can make a difference, and it’s not a big difference but it’s

people who wouldn’t normally get help or who don’t have anybody if it weren’t for me,” she remarked. “They need somebody in their corner because there’s nobody else in their corner. That’s why I’m there.”

While Kathy’s life work has been devoted towards serving others, she has also always made time for her own care. She avidly walks around her neighborhood and regularly attends hot yoga in Fairfax City, where she has lived the past 20 years.

A Chicago native, she grew up in frigid winters and now relishes in the warm Virginia springs and summers when she can spend her time outside at the pool. With both of her sons – Alex and Nick – in college this fall, she has capitalized on her increased free time to complete assorted projects around the house and enjoy the company of her husband.

Her life’s mission has been to make an impact on the lives of others, especially the most vulnerable in our society. Just like Kathy cheers for her family, she embraces and encourages every one of her clients to become the healthiest and happiest they can be.





Exercise and Seniors

Exercise is an important part of nearly everyone's everyday health. This is true for older adults, too. Experts say seniors should aim to be as active as possible. If you are an older adult, exercise can help you live a longer, healthier life.

There are many benefits of exercising when you're a senior, including:

- It improves your strength. This helps you stay independent.
- It improves your balance. This prevents falls.
- It gives you more energy.
- It prevents or delays diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, or osteoporosis.
- It can improve your mood and fight off depression.
- It may improve cognitive function (how your brain works)

It is safe for most adults older than 65 years of age to exercise. Even patients who have chronic illnesses can exercise safely. These include heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and arthritis. In fact, many of these conditions are improved with exercise. If you are not sure if exercise is safe for you or if you are currently inactive, ask your doctor.

Getting Motivated to Work Out

There are 4 types of exercise. It's important to include all 4 types in your exercise routine.

Endurance — increases your breathing and heart rate. Improves the health of your heart, lungs, and circulatory system.

Strength — makes your muscles stronger.

Balance — helps prevent falls.

Flexibility — stretches your muscles,



keeps you limber and more easily able to move.

How often should I exercise?

Seniors age 65 and older should get at least 2.5 hours of moderate aerobic exercise (such as brisk walking) every week. That averages out to about 30 minutes on most days of the week. Or you should get 1 hour and 15 minutes of vigorous exercise (such as jogging) each week. You should also do strength training at least 2 days a week. You can work on balance and flexibility every day.

In addition, you should incorporate physical activity into your daily routine.

Examples of working more activity into your day include:

- Taking the stairs instead of the elevator.
- Parking farther away from your destination.
- Walking or biking places instead of driving.
- Walking your dog.
- Working in the yard.
- Doing light exercises while watching TV.

Should I warm up or cool down before or after exercise?

Warm up for 5 minutes before you exercise. Walking slowly and then stretching are good warm-up activities. You should also cool down with more stretching for 5 minutes when you finish exercising. Cool down longer in warmer weather.

Safety tips

Check with your doctor if you're over 50 and aren't used to exercising before starting an exercise routine. Other reasons to check with your doctor before starting an exercise program include:

- Dizziness or shortness of breath
- Chest pain or pressure
- Blood clots
- An infection
- Sores that won't heal
- Any joint swelling
- Recent surgery
- A hernia

Check with your doctor if you're over 50 and aren't used to exercising before starting an exercise routine. Other reasons to check with your doctor before starting an exercise program include

Wear loose, comfortable clothing and well-fitting, sturdy shoes. Your shoes should have good arch support, and an elevated and cushioned heel to absorb shock. Make sure the shoes are made for the type of physical activity you'll be using them for. Shoes are specially designed for walking, running, tennis, or dancing, for example.

If you are not already active, begin slowly. Start with exercises that you are already comfortable doing. Starting slowly makes it less likely that you will injure yourself. Starting slowly also helps prevent soreness.

Exercise is only good for you if you are feeling well. Wait to exercise until you feel better if you have a cold, the flu or another illness. If you miss exercise for more than 2 weeks, be sure to start slowly again.

Things to consider

If your muscles or joints are sore the day after exercising, you may have done too much. Next time, exercise at a lower intensity. If the pain or discomfort persists, talk to your doctor.

Excerpted from familydoctor.org



703-999-3006 or visit us online at
independentyou.net

*Providing
personalized,
senior care
and care
management
services for
seniors who
wish to remain
independent*



9489 A silver king court
fairfax, va. 22031