

# Vaccines and CVD

What Research Shows About Vaccines and Viruses

Vaccinations can have an incredibly positive impact on heart health. It's important to know how vaccines against COVID-19, flu, RSV, shingles and pneumonia relate to risk factors for cardiovascular disease and stroke.

## Without the relevant vaccinations:

- People may be at greater risk for cardiovascular disease (CVD) because of these viruses.
- CVD and stroke patients may face more severe complications from these viruses.

### COVID-19

COVID-19 infection can raise the risk of myocarditis, a rare heart inflammation, and atrial fibrillation, a common heart rhythm disorder, both of which were observed in patients hospitalized with the virus.

**Age recommendation**  
6 months and older, especially those 65+

### Flu

People with heart disease and those who have had a stroke are more likely to develop serious flu complications. A 2018 study found that the risk of having a heart attack was 6 times higher within a week of a confirmed flu infection. Get vaccinated in September/October, in advance of flu season.

**Age recommendation**  
6 months and older, with rare exceptions  
65+ should get the high-dose vaccine for extra protection.

### RSV (adults)

Respiratory syncytial virus can have serious implications for heart patients. Complications related to RSV, such as congestive heart failure and arrhythmias, account for 14% to 22% of hospitalizations for adults. Underlying CVD has also been linked to 45% to 63% of adult hospitalizations for RSV.

**Age recommendation**  
75 and older  
60–74 at increased risk of severe RSV\*

\*People with chronic heart or lung disease, certain other chronic medical conditions, and residents of nursing homes or other long-term care facilities

### Shingles

People who've had shingles are nearly 30% more likely to experience a heart attack or stroke in the long term.

**Age recommendation**  
50+  
19 and older with weakened immune systems

### Pneumococcal (pneumonia)

People with heart disease are at higher risk of hospitalization and death from pneumonia complications. Vaccination reduces mortality by 22% in adults with CVD.

**Age recommendation**  
50+

**Talk to your health care professional about which vaccines are right for you.**

