

Article: One Senior's Perspective on Flu and Independence

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When 87-year-old Peggy Prendergast went to the hospital for a fractured hip in 2017, nothing prepared her for what she was about to see.

All around her, people were suffering from the debilitating consequences of the flu.

Once a senior is hospitalized because of a medical illness, like the flu and / or its complications, they are also at risk of losing their independence. After a hospital stay, as many as one-third of seniors leave the hospital with a reduced ability to carry out their daily activities.¹

Peggy wants to do everything she can to keep healthy, active and independent for as long as possible.

"I'm a volunteer art teacher in retirement residences and a proud grandmother to beautiful grandchildren, and I value my active and independent lifestyle that allows me to do the things I love," said Peggy. "I get my flu shot each year. It's an action I take that reassures me I am doing what I can to help prevent the flu."

For Peggy, a committed senior advocate, it's important for seniors to get vaccinated this flu season.

Canada's National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends influenza immunization for high-risk individuals, such as adults 65+ and people with chronic diseases².

Vaccination does not provide 100% protection and does not treat influenza and / or its complications or prevent hospitalization or death after the onset of disease.

Photo Recommendation: Include photo of Peggy, active / teaching, etc.

¹ Covinsky, K.E., Palmer, R.M., Fortinsky, R.H., Counsell, S.R., Stewart, A.L., Kresevic, D., Burant, C.J., & Landefeld, C.S. (2003). Loss of independence in activities of daily living in older adults hospitalized with medical illnesses: Increased vulnerability with age. *The American Geriatrics Society*, 51, 451-458. doi: 10.1046/j.1532-5415.2003.51152.x

² Public Health Agency of Canada. (2021). An Advisory Committee Statement (ACS)/National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI): Canadian Immunization Guide Chapter on Influenza and Statement on Seasonal Influenza Vaccine for 2021–2022. <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/healthy-living/canadian-immunization-guide-statement-seasonal-influenza-vaccine-2020-2021/naci-2020-2021-seasonal-influenza-stmt-eng.pdf>