

Flu shot may save heart failure patients' lives



New research published in the American Heart Association's journal *Circulation* shows that getting an annual flu shot can save the lives of heart failure patients.

The annual flu vaccine is a safe and low-cost way to reduce flu-related deaths as well as the complications associated with it. That is why flu shots are recommended for patients who have a history of heart disease and stroke. However, very little is still known about the impact of flu shot on the survival of heart failure patients.

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In patients with heart failure who are older than 65, influenza can prove to be very serious and even fatal in some. This is because these patients already suffer from compromised circulation and other health complications. Infections could potentially exacerbate their heart failure symptoms. That is why patients with heart failure tend to benefit from annual flu shots.

in this new study, researchers analysed data on 134,048 patients who were newly diagnosed with heart failure. The rate of flu vaccination was 16% in 2003, 52% in 2015 and 54% in 2009. Study findings show:

- Flu vaccination as associated with an 18% reduced risk of premature death.
- Annual flu vaccination after a heart failure diagnosis was associated with a 19% reduction in all-cause and cardiovascular death compared with no vaccination.
- Getting a flu shot less than once a year, but more than not at all, was associated with a 13% reduced risk of all-cause death and an 8% reduced risk of cardiovascular death.
- Vaccination that occurred earlier in the flu season (during September-October) resulted in a greater reduction in cardiovascular and all-cause death compared to vaccination that occurred later (November-December).

While this study focused on the impact of flu shots on newly diagnosed heart failure patients, the study authors believe that the protection from a flu shot will likely benefit any patient with heart failure.

"Recent studies have indicated that the influenza vaccination coverage of patients with heart failure is inadequate," said lead study author Daniel Modin, an investigator from the University of Copenhagen in Denmark. "I hope that our study can assist in making physicians and cardiologists who care for patients with heart failure aware of how important influenza vaccination is for their patients. Influenza vaccination may be regarded as a standard treatment in heart failure similar to medications."

Source: [American Heart Association](#)

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