

# Arm Yourself Against the Flu

Each year influenza, or the flu, strikes about 10 percent to 20 percent of Americans. Tragically, an average of 36,000 Americans die from the flu annually, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The rates of death and serious illness are highest for individuals age 65 or older with a medical condition, such as a pulmonary disorder, that puts them at increased risk. Although you can catch the flu at any time, flu season typically runs from

November through April. According to the CDC, your best defense is an annual flu vaccine.

A flu shot causes the body to develop antibodies that protect against viral infection. The best time to get the shot is between September and November, but you still can benefit from a shot after November. Getting your shot also helps protect



## For more information

about flu shot availability, call your local Cleveland Clinic Health System hospital.

loved ones who aren't vaccinated.

Let your doctor know beforehand if you have ever suffered a severe allergic reaction to eggs or to a prior flu shot, or if you have a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome, a disease involving nerve damage and muscle weakness. ●

# Finding Relief from Arthritis

If you suffer from arthritis, there is a range of treatment options to discuss with your healthcare provider.

**Medications.** Try acetaminophens (Tylenol), aspirin and other

over-the-counter (OTC) nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as ibuprofen. Prescription drugs may be used to treat arthritis when NSAIDs don't work. Always follow label directions, and do not use NSAIDs on a long-term basis without checking with your doctor.

**Heat and cold.** Decide which one to use depending on your type of arthritis. Not sure? Check with your doctor or a physical therapist. Do not use ice if you have poor circulation.

**Joint protection.** A splint or brace allows a joint to rest and helps prevent injury.

**Massage.** This may promote blood flow and bring warmth to affected areas. Check with your doctor to determine if massage therapy is right for you. A light touch may be best.

**Weight reduction.** Extra weight increases osteoarthritis risk, especially in the knees. Maintain a healthy weight to reduce stress on joints.

**Exercise.** Swimming, walking and range-of-motion exercises relieve pain and stiffness while promoting flexibility and mobility.

**Acupuncture.** Preliminary research indicates this is a promising therapy for osteoarthritis.

**Glucosamine and chondroitin.** These OTC dietary supplements, taken orally, provide relief for some people with osteoarthritis.

**Surgery.** When other treatment options have been exhausted, surgery may be necessary. Procedures include joint realignment or joint replacement. ●



## Pain management specialists

are available throughout the Cleveland Clinic Health System. Call the physician referral number of your local health system hospital to help you locate a specialist.

# Graceful Aging

## 11 steps to mind and body wellness

**G**rowing older doesn't mean it's time to slow down; rather, graceful aging can bring the energy and freedom to live life to its fullest.

**Seek support.** Social support positively affects mental performance in older adults. Visit with friends and family regularly, advises the American Society on Aging (ASA), and develop a support network through social clubs and civic groups.

**Manage stress.** Cortisol, a hormone released when we're under stress, impairs memory. Combat stress with physical activity to activate norepinephrine, a neurotransmitter that decreases cortisol.

**Quit smoking.** Soon after kicking the habit, people of any age enjoy better blood flow in the arms and legs, according to the National Institute on Aging. You'll also breathe easier and food will taste better.

**Volunteer.** One study reports that older adults volunteering in schools became more active and stronger. Other studies suggest that volunteering increases longevity.

**Adopt a pet.** Older pet owners report less distress, depression and doctor visits than older adults without pets.

**Maintain spirituality.** Religion and spirituality have been positively associated with physical and mental well-being, longevity and a lower likelihood of hypertension.

**Get enough rest.** Lack of sleep interferes with mental functioning. Foster normal sleep cycles by cutting back on napping and avoiding caffeine later in the day.

**Schedule your screenings.** Preventive care includes screenings, vaccines and health counseling, according to the AARP. Talk with your doctor to determine which tests are right for you.

**Exercise your brain.** To combat memory loss, continue to learn through books, public talks or faith-based study, recommends the ASA.

**Eat right.** Eat foods rich in calcium and vitamin D to help prevent bone loss. For a healthy heart, eat more fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and reduce your intake of cholesterol and saturated fats. ●

## Finding Dr. Right

Use the numbers below to help you find a physician.

**The Cleveland Clinic**  
The Appointment Center:  
216/444-2273 or  
800/223-2272, ext. 42273

**Euclid, Hillcrest, Huron and South Pointe Hospitals**  
Medline Physician Referral:  
440/312-4533 or  
800/621-0004

**Fairview, Lakewood and Lutheran Hospitals**  
Medline Physician Referral:  
216/363-2300 or toll-free  
866/733-6363

**Marymount Hospital**  
MED-MATCH Physician Referral: 216/581-WELL (9355)

For an online listing of Cleveland Clinic Health System physicians, go to  
[www.cchspo/phys\\_dir](http://www.cchspo/phys_dir).



## The Exercise Bonus

Regular strengthening and aerobic exercise—at least 30 minutes a day, four days a week—can help you:

- maintain a healthy weight
- decrease your blood pressure and cholesterol
- lower your risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some types of cancer
- decrease arthritis pain and increase flexibility and mobility

- lower stress, improve mood and increase energy
- keep your muscles and bones strong, reducing the risk of bone fractures and other injuries
- improve sleep

For information on fitness programs, call the Senior Circle Plus office nearest you, or visit [www.cchs.net/seniorcircle/privileges](http://www.cchs.net/seniorcircle/privileges) for a calendar of events.

