

COVID-19 and Influenza Vaccination: At the Heart of Cardiovascular Disease Prevention



Adults of any age with heart conditions such as heart failure, coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathies, and possibly hypertension are more likely to get severely ill from COVID-19. Persons with heart conditions are also at higher risk for severe illness from influenza. With the COVID-19 pandemic still ongoing and influenza season just around the corner, both COVID-19 and influenza vaccinations are essential to keep hearts healthy.

As a health care or public health professional, you have the power to educate about and build confidence in COVID-19 vaccination.

COVID-19 vaccines not only are safe and effective but also help

build population immunity. Population immunity means that enough people in the community are protected from getting a disease to make it harder for the disease to spread from person to person. Population immunity even protects those who cannot be vaccinated, such as young children and people with compromised immune systems. COVID-19 vaccination is a safer way to build protection than getting sick with COVID-19 and can help achieve population immunity.

A [JAMA Cardiology editorial](#) highlighted that influenza vaccination is a class I (or highest-strength) recommendation to prevent a second heart attack or stroke. Also, almost half (47.2%) of adults hospitalized with influenza from 2018 to 2019 had underlying heart disease. If you are a health care professional, please get your influenza vaccination when it is offered this fall. Additionally, during routine health care visits and hospitalization, offer influenza vaccination to your patients starting in September 2021 and into January 2022 or later to help protect against the flu and [help keep hearts across America healthy](#).

Together, we can protect millions of hearts with COVID-19 and influenza vaccination.

Yours in health,

Laurence Sperling, MD, FACC, FACP, FAHA, FASPC
Executive Director, Million Hearts®

[View Flu Immunization Guidance](#)

Tools You Can Use

[Find a COVID-19 vaccine near you.](#)

VaccineFinder, operated by Boston Children's Hospital and supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), can search for COVID-19 vaccine locations in your 5-digit ZIP code. VaccineFinder shows vaccine availability and links to the clinics and retail pharmacies website to make an appointment.

[CDC provides recommendations for clinicians on myocarditis and pericarditis after COVID-19 vaccination.](#)

CDC continues to recommend COVID-19 vaccination for everyone 12 years of age and older. Consider myocarditis and pericarditis in adolescents or young adults with acute chest pain, shortness of breath, or palpitations several days after mRNA COVID-19 vaccination.

[CDC provides guidance on implementing or expanding pharmacist-provided medication therapy management.](#) [PDF, 395 KB]

CDC's *Pharmacist-Provided Medication Therapy Management in Medicaid* (MTM) guide can help state health agencies and Medicaid stakeholders develop strategies to implement or expand pharmacist-provided MTM. Implementing MTM can help improve care for Medicaid beneficiaries with chronic conditions, including cardiovascular disease (CVD).

[Guidance promotes hypertension management through the Pharmacists' Patient Care Process.](#) [PDF, 2.8 MB]

CDC's *The Pharmacists' Patient Care Process (PPCP) Approach: An Implementation Guide for Public Health Practitioners* helps public health practitioners and health care professionals engage pharmacists in hypertension management. The guide includes key examples from the Michigan Medicine Hypertension Pharmacists' Program that health care teams can replicate in their own programs.

[Interactive map widget shows heart disease and stroke mortality.](#)

CDC's Heart Disease and Stroke Map Widget displays state-specific and national maps of heart disease and stroke mortality by race/ethnicity and gender. The widget is easy to embed on any website.

[Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project provides downloadable trend tables.](#)

The Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP) Summary Trend Tables contain information on hospital use, including number of discharges, percent of discharges, average length of stay, and in-hospital mortality rate, by state. The tables provide estimates on hospitalizations for the following conditions: acute myocardial infarction, cardiac dysrhythmias, cardiac arrest and ventricular fibrillation, heart failure, acute hemorrhagic cerebrovascular disease, and arterial dissections.

Quick Fact

Strong confidence in vaccines within communities leads to more people getting vaccinated, which leads to fewer COVID-19 illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths.

— [CDC](#)

Million Hearts® in the Community

[CDC publishes data on rates and trends in coronary heart disease and stroke mortality.](#)

CDC has published Local Trends in Heart Disease and Stroke Mortality, a series of state-specific reports documenting county-level coronary heart disease and stroke death rates and trends for ages 35–64 and 65 and older. Contact [Adam Vaughan](#) for a state-specific report documenting county-level data sets.

[Philadelphia FIGHT recognized as Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Exemplar.](#)

Health services organization Philadelphia FIGHT, located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, has been recognized as a Million Hearts® Hypertension Control Exemplar for its commitment to cardiovascular care and hypertension control during the COVID-19 pandemic. Follow Million Hearts® on LinkedIn for more hypertension control stories and share yours in the post's comments section!

[Preeclampsia Foundation posts blog about self-measured blood pressure monitoring during and after pregnancy.](#)

A recent blog post from the Preeclampsia Foundation highlights the importance of self-measured blood pressure (SMBP) monitoring during and after pregnancy to decrease risk of preeclampsia, eclampsia, and HELLP syndrome.

[Webinar for health care providers discusses underlying medical conditions and severe COVID-19.](#)

This May 27, 2021, Clinical Outreach and Communication Activity (COCA) Call updates clinicians on underlying medical conditions associated with severe COVID-19, reviews the evidence on risk for conditions included, and provides resources for health care providers caring for patients with underlying medical conditions.

[Mayors across the U.S. team up with the National Forum for Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention to increase COVID-19 vaccination.](#)

Mayors throughout the United States are working with the National Forum to raise COVID-19 vaccination rates in all communities, including those disproportionately burdened by COVID-19. The National Forum provides COVID-19 resources for mayors and their teams to help communicate the importance of COVID-19 vaccination to the communities they serve.

The Science of Million Hearts®

[Adopting and maintaining a physically active lifestyle in adulthood is associated with lower Medicare and health care costs.](#) (BMJ Open Sp Ex Med)

[Women with heart disease are at high risk for adverse long-term cardiovascular outcomes after pregnancy.](#) (J Am Heart Assoc)

[Self-measured blood pressure monitoring was commonly reported among U.S. adults with self-reported hypertension.](#) (Am J Hypertens)

[Over one fourth of adults with prevalent cardiovascular disease use tobacco products and few quit smoking in nationally representative study.](#) (J Am Heart Assoc)

[Virtual visits represent a viable substitute for in-person visits in the barbershop model of hypertension care for Black men.](#) (J Am Heart Assoc)

Do This!

[Use the COVID-19 Vaccination Toolkits](#)

CDC's COVID-19 Vaccination Toolkits are designed for medical centers, clinics, pharmacies, health departments, and long-term care facilities and are intended to build confidence about COVID-19 vaccination, educate vaccine communities and recipients about the importance of COVID-19 vaccination, and prepare staff, residents, and their families for COVID-19 vaccination in long-term care facilities.

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