

# GOOD NEIGHBOR SCRIPT™

INSPIRATION FOR LIVING WELL FROM *GOOD NEIGHBOR PHARMACY*



## Thinking of Skipping the Flu Vaccine? Here's Why You Should Think Again.

The flu shot isn't always a top priority. Many people don't consider themselves high risk, or they may not be sure the flu shot really works. Others may be worried they'll catch the flu from the shot itself.

But this logic couldn't be more wrong. Influenza can cause serious complications, hospitalization and even death. Depending on the severity of the flu season, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that between 140,000 and 810,000 people in the U.S. are hospitalized with the flu each year and between 12,000 and 61,000 die.

The reality is that many groups of people are at higher risk from the flu, and the flu shot offers significant health benefits to everyone, not just high-risk people. And no, you can't catch the flu from the flu shot. Here's what you need to know about the seasonal flu and why the annual flu vaccine is so important.

### Who's at risk

It's important to know that anyone can experience serious complications from the flu, even people who aren't considered to be high risk. And there are many people who have elevated risk of serious complications, hospitalization and even death if they get the flu.

Older people are at increased risk. The CDC estimates that people 65 and older make up at least 70% of flu-related deaths and at least 50% of flu-related hospitalizations. However, age isn't the only factor. According to the CDC, the following groups are also at higher risk:

- Pregnant women.
- Young children (those under age 5, and especially those under age 2).
- Children with neurological conditions.
- People who have had a stroke.
- People with asthma, heart disease, diabetes, cancer or HIV/AIDS.

### How the flu shot helps

You may have heard that the flu shot is not 100% effective. This is not a myth. The effectiveness of the flu shot varies from year to year because researchers have to make an educated guess about which strains of flu will be circulating the following season. They need to predict this in advance so they have time to make the flu shots. Some years, the match between the vaccine and the variants of the flu virus for the season match perfectly. Other years, there may be a strain in circulation that wasn't in the vaccine.

The CDC estimates that when there's a good match between circulating flu viruses and the vaccine, the shot will reduce your chance of catching the flu by 40% to 60%. However, that's not the only benefit. When people who are vaccinated do get sick with the flu, they often get a milder case than people who have not been vaccinated and they are much less likely to suffer from serious flu complications.

### Benefits to adults

The CDC reports that, when people are hospitalized with the flu, those who have not received the flu vaccine that year are two to five times more likely to die.

The differences the CDC reports for people based on vaccination status are not just in death rates. Vaccinated adults ages 18 to 49 years of age and adults 65 years of age and older hospitalized with the flu are 37% less likely to be admitted to the ICU. Of those who are admitted to the ICU with a flu-like illness, adults ages 50 and older who have had their annual flu vaccine have shorter average stays than those who have not been vaccinated.

### Benefits to pregnant women and infants

Pregnant women who get the flu shot reduce their risk of being hospitalized with flu complications by an average of 40%, the CDC reports. Getting the flu vaccine while pregnant also helps protect babies from the flu before they're old enough to get the flu shot themselves, when they are six months old. That's because the mother passes along to her baby the flu antibodies she builds in response to the flu shot.

### Benefits to children

A 2017 study conducted by the CDC found that the flu vaccination reduced the risk of flu-associated death by 51% among children with underlying high-risk medical conditions and by nearly 65% among healthy children.

### Herd immunity

Even if you don't fall into a high-risk group, it's likely a family member, friend or colleague does. Sometimes you may not even know who in your circle is at higher risk. Plus, while people are most infectious during the early days of the flu, they can also be contagious one to seven days before getting sick. Simple everyday activities done right before you get sick, such as going to work, visiting a friend or having a family member over for dinner, can potentially spread the disease to them. By getting vaccinated, you not only save yourself from a week or more of misery, you also prevent yourself from unknowingly infecting and perhaps seriously sickening those around you.

## Health & Fitness Don't Fall Victim to Fall Allergies

When people think of seasonal allergies, they typically think of spring allergies. But the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America estimates that between 10% and 20% of Americans are allergic to ragweed pollen, a common allergen found in the air in late summer and fall.

While it helps to use the same strategies you use to fight spring allergies, ragweed isn't the only fall allergy concern: Two other common allergens, dust mites and mold, that thrive on higher humidity levels can also be prevalent in fall, especially in parts of the U.S. that have damp autumns.

Unlike with pollen allergies, mold and dust mite allergies can't be combated simply by closing your windows. In fact, not only may these allergens spread by growing in your house, your forced hot air system may be blowing a lot of dust and other allergens through your home.

Here are four ways to combat fall allergies:

### 1. Install a HEPA filter in your heating system.

This will help remove allergens such as mold, dust mites and pollen from the air that's blowing around.

**2. If you live in a climate that has damp falls, use a dehumidifier.** Keep the relative humidity of your home between 40% and 50% so that the air is comfortable to breathe but dry enough to discourage mold and dust mite growth.

**3. Wear a mask when you rake leaves.** This will help prevent you from inhaling the mold spores that are likely thriving in dark, damp piles of leaves. And be sure to change your clothes and take a shower as soon as you come in so you don't get mold spores all over your home.

**4. Minimize time spent outside during peak pollen times.** Since ragweed pollen counts tend to be highest between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., shift the time you spend outdoors to early mornings or late afternoons, when pollen counts are lower.



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**Prep Time**  
10 minutes

**Cook Time**  
50 minutes

**Total Time**  
60 minutes

**Serves**  
4

### September Recipe

## One-Pot Fried Rice With Chicken and Vegetables

This one-pot fried rice makes use of in-season vegetables, but you can easily substitute whatever fresh (or frozen!) veggies you have on hand. Let the rice cool slightly on a lined sheet pan while you prep and cook the other ingredients. This will dry the rice out just a bit so that it more easily soaks up the soy sauce and vinegar and doesn't stick to the pan when you fry it.

#### Ingredients

2 cups uncooked long-grain white rice	1 medium zucchini
4 tablespoons canola oil, divided	4 cloves garlic
1 pound boneless, skinless chicken thighs	2 large eggs
1 small yellow onion	3 tablespoons soy sauce, plus more to taste
2 medium carrots, peeled	1 tablespoon unseasoned rice vinegar
2 cups fresh green beans	Salt and pepper, to taste

#### Tools

Measuring cups and spoons  
Strainer  
Large pot with a lid  
Cutting board  
Chef's knife  
Large plate  
2 small bowls  
Fork

#### Tips Can!

- Measure and rinse the rice.
- Spread the rice on a lined baking sheet.
- Crack and beat the eggs.
- Stir the finished fried rice.

#### Instructions

##### 1. Cook the rice

Rinse the rice under cold water in a strainer. In a large pot with a lid, combine the rice with 3 cups of water. Bring it to a boil, then turn the heat to low and cover the pot. Simmer for 20 minutes, then let the rice stand off the heat for 10 more minutes. Spread the cooked rice evenly over a sheet pan lined with parchment paper. Refrigerate.

##### 2. Prep the remaining ingredients

Prepping the remaining ingredients after the rice is cooked will give the rice time to cool. Cut the chicken thighs into bite-sized pieces. Roughly chop the onion, carrots, green beans, zucchini and garlic. Beat the eggs in a small bowl. Combine the soy sauce and rice vinegar in another small bowl.

##### 3. Cook the chicken

Return the large pot to medium heat. Add 1 tablespoon of oil, then add the chicken. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the chicken is cooked through, about 4 minutes. Remove the chicken and set it aside on a large plate.

##### 4. Cook the egg

Return the pot to medium heat and add another tablespoon of oil, swirling it until the pan is entirely coated and the oil is very hot. Add the beaten egg and cook, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, just until opaque, less than a minute. Remove the egg and set it aside on the plate with the chicken.

##### 5. Cook the vegetables

Return the pot to medium heat and add the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil. Add the onion and carrots and cook until both start to soften, about 4 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the green beans and zucchini and cook until all vegetables are cooked al dente, about 3 minutes more.

##### 6. Finish the fried rice

Add the cooked rice and the soy sauce-rice vinegar mixture and cook about 2 minutes, stirring often so that the rice absorbs the sauce evenly. Add the cooked chicken and egg back to the pot, and stir until everything is evenly mixed.

##### 7. Serve

Serve the warm fried rice in bowls, with extra soy sauce if you want.

## Ask a Pharmacist Can I Treat the Flu With Over-the-Counter Medications?

The quick answer to this question is no. The flu is a virus; therefore, the only way to treat the flu is with prescription antiviral medications. However, you can treat the symptoms of the flu with over-the-counter medications. Common symptoms of the flu are fever, aching muscles, chills and sweats, headache, fatigue and weakness. Most of these symptoms can be treated with over-the-counter medications, rest and a little TLC! With all of this being said, the best way to treat the flu is to prevent the flu! The number one way to prevent the flu is by getting an annual flu shot and proper hand washing.



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## Local Love Gerdes Pharmacy

CONNEAUT, OHIO

"Our patients are our neighbors and friends."



#### How many years has Gerdes Pharmacy been in business?

Gerdes Pharmacy has been in business for 60 years at the same location in Conneaut. The pharmacy was purchased in 1960 by Bill Gerdes and is now owned by his son, Kerry. Scott, Kerry's son, works as a pharmacist and is the third generation of the family to join the pharmacy.

#### What has been the most significant change within your pharmacy over the past five years?

We have been doing more compliance packaging, medication synchronization and medication therapy management in the last five years. We have taken a more active role in our patients' outcomes through these services.

#### What are your favorite ways to get involved with your community?

Kerry is an active member of the Rotary Club of Conneaut, the Elevation drug awareness team, the local chamber of commerce and the Conneaut Boat Club. He was also the Conneaut 2015 Citizen of the Year. Gerdes Pharmacy also donates to numerous non-profit fundraisers in the local area.

#### How do your patients and community shape your offerings? What keeps your patients coming back?

We are able to adapt quickly to the needs of our community. Like many independent pharmacies, we are compounding hand sanitizer to meet our community's need. This is something that the larger chains are not currently doing. Patients keep coming back because of our customer service, because of our wide variety of services and because they know that we have their best interest in mind.

#### What do you think your patients love most about your pharmacy?

I think they love our attention to detail and how we know their names. Patients also like the personal connection. We know them. Our entire staff lives in Conneaut, so our patients are our neighbors, friends and fellow church parishioners.

#### What does Locally Loved mean to you?

Locally Loved means being there and caring for our community. If we show love to our patients and treat them well, they show the love in return. We know that patients have other choices when it comes to choosing their pharmacy, whether that be a chain or mail order pharmacy. Yet they still choose their local independent pharmacy. We really appreciate our patients who choose us.