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NYC Vital Signs

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

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Immunization to Prevent Influenza and Pneumonia

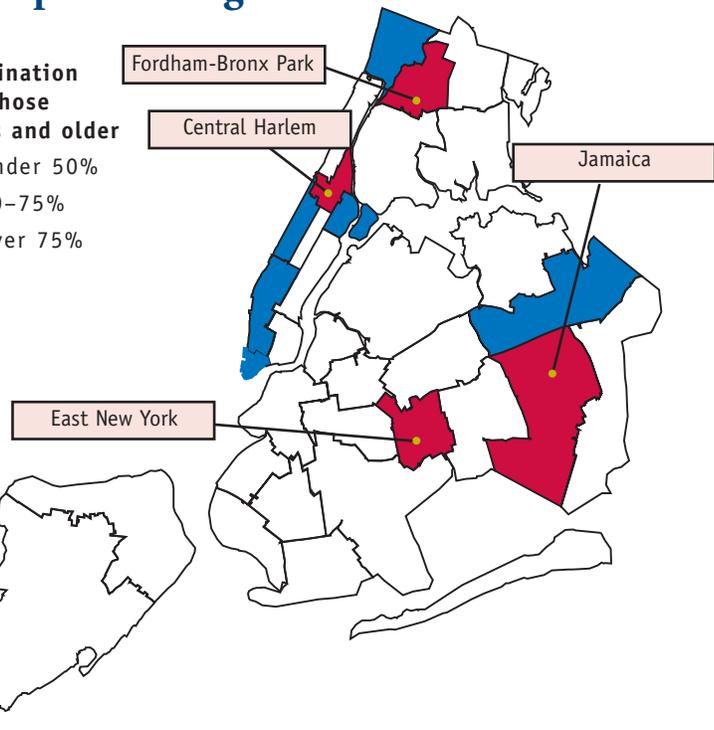
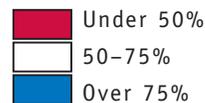
Every year, influenza and pneumonia cause thousands of New Yorkers to be hospitalized and more than 2,000 deaths. Much of the illness and death can be prevented by vaccination. Annual flu shots are recommended for all adults 50 years and older. A one-time pneumonia shot is recommended for those 65 years and older. Adults 65 years and older are at highest risk for developing complications; 63% of these older New Yorkers received their annual flu shot. While higher than previous years, this falls well below the national target of 90%. Flu vaccination rates vary dramatically by race and neighborhood. Only 52% of black New Yorkers 65 years and older were vaccinated, compared to 67% of whites.

This is the first in a series of reports based on the New York City Community Health Survey, a telephone survey that collects critical, neighborhood specific information on health in New York City. The 2002 survey interviewed nearly 10,000 New Yorkers, with representation from 33 communities. The survey was conducted by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene between May and June 2002. For full survey details see www.nyc.gov/health/survey.

Some neighborhoods are much less protected against flu than others

- Vaccination rates vary dramatically from neighborhood to neighborhood.
- Kingbridge-Riverdale, Bayside-Meadows, Lower Manhattan, Chelsea-Village, the Upper West Side and East Harlem had the best vaccination rates in the city. Even in these neighborhoods, however, up to 25% of older New Yorkers did not receive their annual flu shot.
- In Jamaica, East New York, Central Harlem, and Fordham-Bronx Park, more than half of older New Yorkers did not receive a flu shot.

Flu vaccination among those 65 years and older



Black New Yorkers and women are less likely to be vaccinated

Influenza

- Fewer than half of New Yorkers who needed influenza vaccination received it. More than 300,000 older New Yorkers were left unvaccinated against influenza.
- Those 65 years and older are at highest risk of dying from influenza. Among those 65 years and older, vaccination rates were particularly low among women and blacks, with 59% of women and 52% of blacks receiving vaccination.
- Fewer than 1 in 3 New Yorkers aged 50–64 were vaccinated. This low vaccination rate is probably due to vaccine shortages and the fact that people in this age group have only recently been advised to get a flu shot.

There are no vaccine shortages expected for the 2002–2003 flu season.

% Vaccinated	
Influenza Vaccine	
Age (in years)	
50–64	31
65+	63
Sex (65+ years)	
Male	69
Female	59
Race/Ethnicity (65+ years)¹	
White, non-Hispanic	67
Black, non-Hispanic	52
Hispanic	64

Pneumonia

- Although pneumococcal vaccine is recommended for everyone 65 years of age and older, only 50% of older New Yorkers reported receiving vaccination, leaving 431,000 older New Yorkers unvaccinated against a preventable cause of pneumonia.
- While all groups have very low rates of pneumococcal vaccination, the rate among blacks is particularly low—just 40%. The number of Asians 65 years and older interviewed in the survey was too low to provide a firm statistical estimate; however, the pneumococcal vaccination rate among older Asians was very low and warrants further attention.

% Vaccinated	
Pneumococcal Vaccine	
Age (in years)	
65+	50
Sex (65+ years)	
Male	53
Female	49
Race/Ethnicity (65+ years)	
White, non-Hispanic	55
Black, non-Hispanic	40
Hispanic	45

To find out where you can get a **free flu shot**, call toll free:

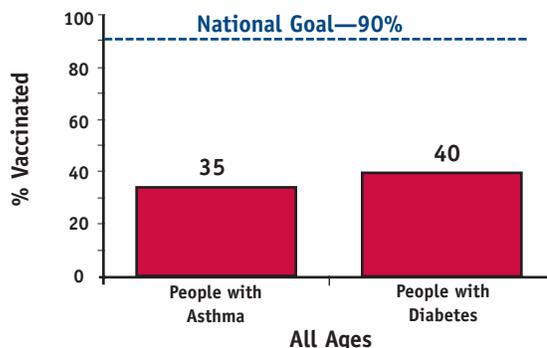
1-866-FLU-LINE
(1-866-358-5463)

¹ Mutually exclusive racial-ethnic categories are presented. Data from Asian, Other, and multiple race categories are not presented due to small sample size.

Fewer than half of high-risk individuals are getting flu shots

- People with chronic diseases, such as diabetes and asthma, should have a flu shot each year, regardless of their age.
- Overall, only 40% of New Yorkers with diabetes had received a flu shot, leaving more than 200,000 people with diabetes vulnerable to influenza. Among people with asthma, only 35% were vaccinated.
- More than one-third of the most vulnerable New Yorkers—people 65 years and older with diabetes or asthma—did not receive a flu shot.

Vaccination rates among people with chronic diseases fall far below the national target of 90%



Everyone with diabetes, asthma, and other chronic illnesses should get an annual flu shot, regardless of age.

Increasing access to health care can improve vaccination rates

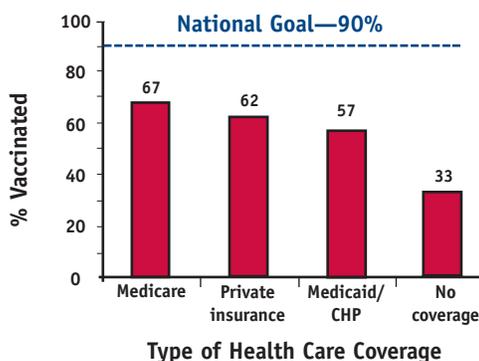
Health Insurance

- Individuals with health insurance have about twice the rate of vaccination as those without health insurance.

Personal Doctor

- Having a personal doctor significantly increases the chances of getting a flu shot. Among the estimated 95,000 older New Yorkers who did not have a personal doctor, fewer than half received a flu shot.

Older New Yorkers with health insurance have about twice the rate of vaccination as those without health insurance



But access to health care is no guarantee that a person will be vaccinated

- While health care coverage and having a personal physician increase the likelihood that a person will get a flu shot, it is disappointing that the vast majority (81%) of unvaccinated older New Yorkers have both health insurance and a personal physician. This underscores the need for patients, providers, community and faith-based organizations, senior centers, and health systems to work together

to ensure that all New Yorkers receive the benefit of these potentially life-saving vaccinations.

81% of unvaccinated older New Yorkers have both health insurance and a physician.

Recommendations

All people 50 years of age and older should get vaccinated against influenza *EVERY YEAR*.

Influenza vaccine is also recommended for:

- All persons 6 months and older with chronic medical conditions such as heart disease, pulmonary disorders including asthma, diabetes, kidney disease, and compromised immune systems
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities
- Pregnant women
- Persons aged 6 months to 18 years old on long-term aspirin therapy
- Close contacts of individuals in the above groups, including household members and persons who provide home care
- All health care workers and employees of nursing homes and chronic care facilities.

All people 65 years of age and older should receive the pneumococcal vaccine *ONE* time.

A single revaccination is recommended after 5 years for:

- All who have compromised immune systems
- People vaccinated before 65 years of age who are currently over the age of 65 years.

For more detailed information, please see www.nyc.gov/health/flu.

A Report from the New York City Community Health Survey



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To contact NYC Vital Signs, e-mail survey@health.nyc.gov.

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