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WebMD®

# FOCUS ON

WINTER 2024



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SCAN ME

Access additional  
RSV content online.

Use your mobile  
phone camera to  
activate the QR code.





SCAN ME

Watch this video on **How to Protect Yourself and Others Against RSV**. Use your mobile phone camera to activate the QR code.

# THE LATEST ON

## HEALTHY AGING

### MAKE HAPPINESS ROUTINE

You may have more time to relax, sleep in, and break out of your routine now than you did when you were younger, but that might not be the best thing for you. In a study of 1,800 older adults, many of whom were Black and Hispanic, those who got up the earliest and stayed active for more hours throughout the day were happier, less likely to be depressed, and even had better thinking skills. As the number of daily active hours fell, happiness and brain performance did, too, while the odds of depression went up. The happiest people rose before 7 a.m. and kept going for at least 15 hours.

SOURCE: *JAMA Psychiatry*

# 55.6 MILLION

Number of adults ages 60 and up who have at least one chronic condition, such as arthritis or COPD.

SOURCE: *Frontiers in Public Health*

# 1 in 6

Number of people in the world who will be over age 60 by 2030.

SOURCE: World Health Organization

### NOURISH YOUR BRAIN

Do you take a daily multivitamin? It could help you hang onto your memory as you age. In a study of 3,500 adults over age 60, half of them took a daily vitamin for 3 years while the others got a sugar pill. After 1 year, those in the vitamin group showed improvements in memory and thinking skills based on a written test. They held onto those gains over the 3-year period while the others showed normal losses in that area. Those who benefited the most had pre-existing heart disease. It's possible that their condition had caused added nutrition deficits that the vitamins helped.

SOURCE: *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*

### STRIDES TO BETTER HEART HEALTH

You can walk your way to a healthier heart. Researchers logged the daily steps of 452 older adults. Three years later, they checked on everyone's health. Forty of them had developed some kind of heart trouble, like heart failure, stroke, or heart disease. The people most likely to have these problems were the ones who took less than 2,000 steps a day. Each additional 500 steps a day over 2,000 lowered risk for heart concerns by 14%. Those who got more than 4,500 steps each day were 77% less likely than the 2,000 steppers to have one of these issues.

SOURCE: American Heart Association



SOUTH\_AGENCY/VIA GETTY IMAGES

# STATS & FACTS

By Sonya Collins

Reviewed by Neha Pathak, MD, WebMD Lead Medical Editor

## 6.2 million

Number of adults ages 60 and up who have multiple chronic conditions, such as heart disease and diabetes.



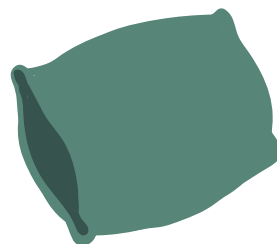
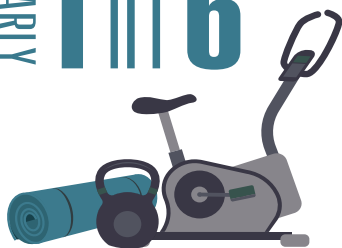
## 1 in 17

Number of adults over 60 worldwide who have depression. It's about 1 in 20 among adults of all ages.



## NEARLY 1 in 6

Number of U.S. men over 65 who get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity every week. More than 1 in 5 men ages 50 to 64 do.

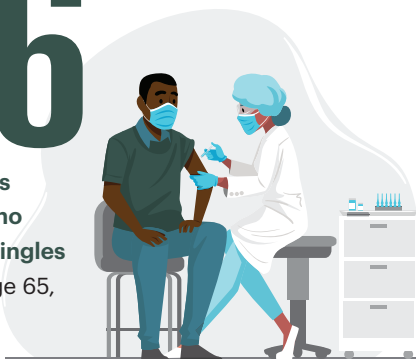


## 7 to 9

Number of hours of sleep older adults need every night.

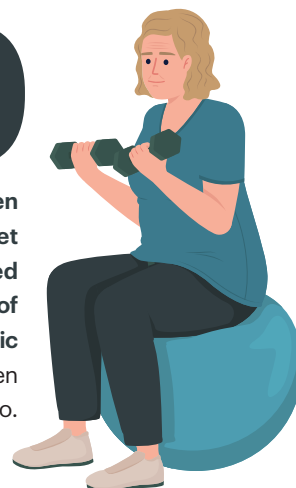
## 1 in 6

Number of adults ages 50 to 64 who have gotten a shingles vaccine. After age 65, almost 1 in 2 get the shot.



## 1 in 9

Number of U.S. women over age 65 who get the recommended 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity. About 1 in 6 women ages 50 to 64 do.



FREEPIK.COM/GETTY IMAGES

SOURCES: National Institute on Aging, World Health Organization, *Frontiers in Public Health*, CDC, AARP Survey

For people 60 years and older,  
including those with certain health conditions\*

# PROTECT AGAINST RSV with

# AREXVY



**AREXVY**  
(RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS  
VACCINE, ADJUVANTED)

## WHAT IS RSV?

RSV is a contagious respiratory virus that typically causes mild symptoms. However, RSV can be serious for people 60 years and older, including those with **asthma, diabetes, COPD, and CHF.**

AREXVY is given as a single-dose shot and can be administered at the same time as a quadrivalent flu vaccine.

AREXVY is proven, through a clinical study, to provide RSV protection.

## OVER 82% EFFECTIVE

in preventing lung and lower airway infection from RSV in people aged 60 years and older

## OVER 94% EFFECTIVE

in preventing lung and lower airway infection from RSV in people aged 60 years and older with **asthma, diabetes, COPD, CHF, advanced liver or kidney disease, or any chronic respiratory/pulmonary disease**

RSV=respiratory syncytial virus.

\*Asthma, diabetes, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), chronic heart failure (CHF), advanced liver or kidney disease, or any chronic respiratory/pulmonary disease.

### What is AREXVY?

AREXVY is an FDA-approved vaccine for the prevention of lower respiratory tract disease (LRTD) caused by respiratory syncytial virus in people 60 years of age and older.

### Important Safety Information

- You should not receive AREXVY if you are allergic to any of its ingredients
- Fainting can happen after getting injectable vaccines, including AREXVY. Precautions should be taken to avoid injury due to fainting
- Some people with weakened immune systems may have reduced immune responses to AREXVY
- The most common side effects are injection site pain, fatigue, muscle pain, headache, and joint pain

Please see additional Important Safety Information on the following page.

Please see Important Facts About AREXVY on the back side of the following page.

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RSAJRNA230027 November 2023  
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### Important Safety Information (Cont.)

- Vaccination with AREXVY may not result in protection of all vaccine recipients
- Ask your healthcare provider about the risks and benefits of AREXVY. Only a healthcare provider can decide if AREXVY is right for you

You are encouraged to report vaccine adverse events to the US Department of Health and Human Services. Visit [www.vaers.hhs.gov](http://www.vaers.hhs.gov) to file a report, or call 1-800-822-7967.

**\$** Need price information?  
Visit [GSKforyou.com](http://GSKforyou.com)

Scan the QR code for questions to ask your doctor.

Find AREXVY near you.  
Visit [AREXVY.com](http://AREXVY.com)



# Important Facts About



## WHAT IS AREXVY?

- AREXVY is an FDA-approved vaccine for the prevention of lower respiratory tract disease (LRTD) caused by respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in people 60 years of age and older

## WHAT IS RSV AND WHAT CAUSES IT?

- RSV is a respiratory virus that typically causes mild symptoms but can lead to serious respiratory illness in older adults. It can cause lower respiratory tract disease, which may include infections of the lungs and lower airways
- RSV spreads via respiratory droplets. It can lead to more severe symptoms in people with long-term respiratory or heart diseases

## HOW DOES AREXVY WORK?

- AREXVY is a vaccine that works to boost your immunity to protect against LRTD caused by RSV

## HOW IS AREXVY GIVEN?

- AREXVY is given as a single dose (0.5 mL) into the muscle of the upper arm

## WHO SHOULD NOT GET AREXVY?

- You should not receive AREXVY if you are allergic to any of its ingredients

## WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS?

- Fainting can happen after getting injectable vaccines, including AREXVY. Precautions should be taken to avoid injury due to fainting
- Some people with weakened immune systems may have reduced immune responses to AREXVY
- The most common side effects are injection site pain, fatigue, muscle pain, headache, and joint pain

## ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

- Vaccination with AREXVY may not result in protection of all vaccine recipients
- Ask your healthcare provider about the risks and benefits of AREXVY. Only a healthcare provider can decide if AREXVY is right for you

## NEED MORE INFORMATION?

- This is only a summary of important information
- To learn more about AREXVY, talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or other healthcare provider
- Visit [AREXVY.com](https://www.alexvy.com) or call 888-AREXVY9 (888-273-9899) for the FDA-approved product labeling

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You are encouraged to report vaccine adverse events to the US Department of Health and Human Services. Visit [vaers.hhs.gov](https://vaers.hhs.gov) to file a report, or call 1-800-822-7967.

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# HEALTH SCREENINGS FOR YOUR 60s AND UP

## WHAT TO KEEP TABS ON AND WHEN

By Rachel Reiff Ellis

Reviewed by Neha Pathak, MD, WebMD Lead Medical Editor



Medical tests that screen for health issues aren't a one-size-fits-all affair, especially as you get older. The right ones for you will depend on your risk factors and health history. But the name of the game for them all is prevention.

"The goal is to help people live longer and healthier and happier and to try to catch things early, so we can do something about them before they become too much of a problem," says Christine Kistler, MD, associate professor of geriatrics at University of Pittsburgh in Pennsylvania.

Here are a few areas to keep tabs on as you enter your golden years.

**Bone density testing.** Bone health is a big concern as you age, especially if you're a woman, over 65, and White or Asian—all risk factors for osteoporosis. Once men reach 70, their risk of bone loss goes up, too.

Your doctor can test how strong your bones are with a special X-ray called a bone density scan. You may also take questionnaires, have physical exams, or get ultrasounds to help predict your risk of having low bone density or breaking a bone.

**Lipid screening.** The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute recommends adults over 65 get a yearly complete cholesterol test, also called a lipid panel or lipid profile, and more often if you have abnormal results.

"Older age increases your risk of heart attack," Kistler says. "So what would be an OK lipid level when you're 45 may not be an OK lipid level when you're 65."

This is especially important for both older Black men and women. Two of the most frequent causes of death for both of these populations is heart disease and stroke.

**Eyes, ears, and teeth.** Keeping tabs on your oral health, hearing, and eyesight is not only important for disease and sensory loss prevention, but as you age, being able to see, hear, and eat are part of a good quality of life.

"For example, we know that hearing loss is associated with dementia," Kistler says. "We're not sure if it's that hearing loss causes dementia or that dementia causes hearing loss, but honestly, it might be both ways. The harder it is for you to engage socially, the worse it is for you."

**Fall risk screening.** Kistler says there are syndromes of aging that geriatric specialists like to screen for because they might be able to do something about them. For example: falling.

"You might not think of falling as a 'disease,' but it's a high-risk condition for older people," she says. Your doctor can look at whether you've fallen in the past year, as well as rank you on a scale that assesses your fall risk. If you're

high risk, you may benefit from vestibular rehab to help restore balance or physical therapy to build muscle strength.

### IMPORTANT VACCINES TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR DOCTOR

Christine Kistler, MD, lists key immunizations for later years.

- + **Flu:** Aging immune systems may need larger doses
- + **Pneumococcal:** Pneumonia prevention
- + **RSV:** Approved May 2023
- + **DTaP:** Whooping cough prevention
- + **Shingles:** Newest version is more effective
- + **COVID-19:** Including booster shots

# RSV IN OLDER ADULTS

## WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT THIS ILLNESS WHEN YOU'RE 60-PLUS

By Rachel Reiff Ellis

Reviewed by Neha Pathak, MD, Lead Medical Editor



Respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV, is a common virus that affects the lungs and airways. It typically causes the same type of symptoms as a mild cold, but in older adults, these symptoms can become more severe. In fact, compared to those who are younger, older adults who get RSV are more likely to become hospitalized and die.

“RSV infections develop in approximately 10% of older adults,” says Barbara Resnick, PhD, professor of organizational systems and adult health and co-director of the Biology and Behavior Across the Lifespan Organized Research Center at University of Maryland School of Nursing in Baltimore. “And the impact of the disease is similar to that of influenza A causing significant changes in function, cognition, and quality of life, as well as increasing the risk of stroke or heart attack.”

Your risk of having more serious RSV symptoms climbs higher after age 65. That risk goes up even further if you also have a weakened immune system or chronic heart or lung disease.

### SYMPTOMS

RSV often feels like a cold. You may have a congested or runny nose, dry cough, low-grade fever, sore throat, sneezing, and headache. If you have

asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), or congestive heart failure, these conditions usually get worse with RSV.

Once RSV gets more severe, other symptoms can happen, such as fever, severe cough, wheezing, rapid or difficult breathing, and bluish color of the skin due to lack of oxygen. You can also develop pneumonia.

“With RSV it may not simply end there,” Resnick says. “Secondary bacterial infections occur in 12.5% of older adults who have RSV. Also, RSV infections increase the risk of cardiac events such as heart attacks and strokes.”

### TREATMENT

There is no direct treatment for RSV. To feel better, you can treat the symptoms, much like you would a cold. “[Eat] chicken soup if that helps you, and maintain activity and food and fluid intake,” Resnick says.

If you have COPD or asthma, be sure to use your medications as prescribed to aid in breathing. Ask your doctor if you think these medications need to be adjusted while you have RSV. If you’re admitted to the hospital for treatment, doctors will likely give you IV fluids, extra oxygen,

and antibiotics for any secondary infections you have.

### PREVENTION

The best way to keep from getting RSV is practicing good germ prevention. Wash your hands often and keep them away from your face, clean and disinfect surfaces, and avoid sick people. And find out if you can get immunized.

“A vaccine has recently been approved,” Resnick says. “Obtaining this vaccine is something you should talk with your primary health care provider about.”

## RAISED RISK

RSV “season” is longest in many regions with higher percentages of African Americans, such as:

- + Alabama
- + Georgia
- + Mississippi
- + North Carolina
- + South Carolina



# KEEP YOUR BRAIN SHARP

## LEARN THE VALUE OF MENTAL EXERCISE AND WHICH TYPES MAY WORK BEST

By Kendall K. Morgan | Reviewed by Neha Pathak, MD, WebMD Lead Medical Editor

As you age, it's normal to wonder and worry about memory loss. Forgetting an appointment every now and again is normal, but getting lost in familiar places is not. Many people will notice some amount of memory loss with age, but mental exercise can help you slow the decline.

### TAKE A TRIP

If you search online for brain training, you'll find plenty of options. But, says Denise Park, MD, a neuroscientist at The University of Texas at Dallas, while that kind of mental exercise may lead to improvements on very specific tasks, it's less clear that it translates into gains in your regular life. Instead of computer games or crossword puzzles, Park recommends activities that are mentally challenging, social, and new.

"One of the very best things you can do is travel," she says. "If you travel to a foreign country, you're constantly faced

with challenges. What's going on? How do you get a taxi?"

She says there's nothing better than that kind of real-world problem-solving to give your mind a workout. Other ideas closer to home include joining a quilting circle or book club.

### TRY SOMETHING NEW

What's the evidence? Park conducted a study to see if learning new skills for 3 months could help older adults with their memory. People learned quilting or digital photography or both, spending more than 15 hours a week on their new hobbies. And it made a difference. Those who picked up a new skill did better on memory tests than those who only did social activities or easy games at home.

Park says she doesn't think the social component is required to give your brain a boost. But learning something new along with other people can keep you motivated to follow through with what

you've set out to do. Also look for simple ways to bring more problem-solving into your daily routine. If you're right-handed, she says, brushing your teeth with your left hand offers a serious mental challenge. Learn a language, like French or Spanish, especially one that's completely new to you.

"Learning Italian wouldn't challenge someone who spoke it as a child as much as it would challenge someone who never tried it before," Park says, and these days you can find courses online to learn just about any new language or skill you can imagine.

How much mental exercise do you need? That's harder to say.

"I wish I could give you an exact amount, but I don't think we're there yet," Park says. "What's important is that you get challenged [through activities that are] outside your routine. People who stay engaged and do a lot of activities definitely do better cognitively than people who do not."



# EATING FOR OPTIMUM HEALTH IN YOUR 60s AND OLDER

## FINE-TUNING YOUR DIET AS YOU AGE

By Rachel Reiff Ellis

Reviewed by Neha Pathak, MD, WebMD Lead Medical Editor



Once you've passed your 60th birthday, your metabolism starts to slow down. This, combined with less activity, decreasing muscle mass, and new and different prescription medications for an aging body, requires some tweaks in your nutrition.

So make each food choice count, says Jennifer Bruning, a registered dietitian/nutritionist with expertise in elderly nutrition based in Chicago, and a spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

"Often, this means cutting back on low-nutrient 'treat' foods like candy or desserts, or snack foods like chips," she says. "Make most of the foods you choose 'nutrient-dense,' meaning foods that have lots of essential nutrients that your body needs more of. That way, you're less likely to get full on foods that don't serve you."

Here are some guidelines to get you started.

### GET MORE OF THESE

**Protein.** Lower muscle mass doesn't just mean lost strength. It also means an increased risk for falls and injuries. Eating more protein helps protect the muscle you have, especially when you combine it with physical activity that's appropriate for your ability level and health status.

"While recommended amounts of protein for average adults is 0.8g/kg/day (kg of body weight), there's evidence to support an intake closer to 1.2g/kg/day for older adults to help preserve muscle mass and make up for lower levels of absorption of protein from foods," Bruning says.

**Calcium/vitamin D.** This power combination keeps your muscles, heart, and hormones working well. They're both also crucial for strong and healthy bones.

"As we age, we tend to consume fewer

vitamin D-rich foods and have less exposure to sunlight," says Krista Gonzales, MD, endocrinologist at Pritikin Longevity Center in Miami, FL. "In addition to that, our skin becomes less efficient at making

### HOW TO STAY ON TRACK

These tips can help you stay the course.

- + **Plan ahead** with a weekly menu.
- + **Prioritize your budget** so you can continue at any income.
- + **Consider prep time** so cooking isn't overwhelming.



MOMO PRODUCTIONS/VIA GETTY IMAGES

vitamin D after the age of 65.”

You need them at higher quantities once you reach certain ages, and those ages are different for men and women. Men should up their daily intake from 1,000 IU to 1,200 IU at age 70. Women should do the same once they hit 50.

**Vitamin B12.** Vitamin B12 becomes harder to absorb as you age. “B12 is essential for many bodily functions, like maintaining the nervous system, forming red blood cells, and for protein metabolism,” Bruning says. You can get it by upping your lean meat, fish, poultry, dairy, and egg portions.

### DON'T FORGET WATER

Your thirst signals start to dull as you age, which can increase your risk of dehydration. Keep your water intake up but be sure you're combining it with enough protein for maximum effect, says Gonzales.

“Insufficient protein intake in the

setting of high or even normal water consumption and ‘water pills’ or diuretics can lead to low salt levels in the blood, a condition known as hyponatremia,” Gonzales says.

Everyone’s needs are different, so ask your doctor about how much you should drink personally.

“It’s important to individualize our water intake as we age,” Gonzales says. “Our climates, environments, and other health issues such as heart failure, kidney disease, and even the medications we take will influence how much water we require.”

### FOOD ACCESS

An important factor in eating healthy food is the ability to get it. Black seniors are nearly four times as likely and Latino seniors are three times as likely to experience food insecurity compared to White seniors. Higher still is the risk for the Native American community, with 1 in 4 unable to access healthy food.

“Some seniors have limited access to nutritious foods,” Bruning says. “Learn what options are available in your community to ensure you have access to daily wholesome and nutritious foods. Services like Meals on Wheels or community organizations may be able to help.”

## SNACKS TO SKIP

Krista Gonzales, MD, gives examples of what older adults (and all ages) should limit in their diet.

- + Processed foods
- + Saturated fats
- + Trans fats
- + Added sugars

looking to  
**STAY WELL**  
 every day



## Fuel Your Body with Good for You Ingredients



### ECHINACEA

Beautiful flower traditionally thought to help your body's defenses

### LEMONGRASS

Tasty herb commonly thought to be a supportive hand to your overall health



### ROSE HIPS

Tart and tasty herb commonly used to help support your well-being

### ELDERFLOWERS

Light colored flower traditionally considered to help support a healthy lifestyle



**BIGELOW**  
 BENEFITS

Redefining Wellness  
**EVERY DAY**