

Can a Flu Shot Lower the Risk of Death in Those With Hypertension?

If you have high blood pressure, the flu vaccine may prevent heart attack or stroke.

September 10, 2019 By [Alicia Green](#)

New research presented at the European Society of Cardiology Congress 2019 suggests that in addition to protecting against the influenza virus, the flu vaccine could also help lower the risk of death in folks with high blood pressure, reports [ESC](#).

For the study, researchers examined the data of more than 608,000 people with hypertension, ages 18 to 100, during nine consecutive flu seasons (2007 to 2016). Next, scientists determined the number of patients who received the flu shot before each flu season and then documented how many individuals died. In addition, investigators noted deaths from all causes, mortalities from any cardiovascular issue and death from heart attack or stroke.

Lastly, scientists studied the association between receiving a vaccine before flu season and the risk of death during flu season. Results showed that after researchers adjusted for several factors, those who got inoculated during flu season experienced an 18% reduced risk of dying of all causes, a 16% drop in the probability of dying of any cardiovascular cause and a 10% decreased risk of dying of heart attack or stroke.

Scientists explained that the flu triggers a strong immune reaction that leads to inflammation, which fights infection and expels the pathogen from the body. However, this natural response can increase the risk of a heart attack or stroke—two conditions that are more likely to plague people with hypertension.

According to Daniel Modin, a research associate at the University of Copenhagen and the study's first author, a majority of people with high blood pressure were not vaccinated during the nine flu seasons studied. (Coverage among these folks ranged between 26% and 36%.)

“Given these results, it is my belief that all my patients with high blood pressure should have an annual flu vaccination,” Modin said. “Vaccination is safe, cheap, readily available and decreases influenza infection. On top of that, our study suggests that it could also protect against fatal heart attacks and strokes and deaths from other causes.”

For a related article, read [“Living With Type 2 Diabetes? A Flu Shot Could Save Your Life.”](#)

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