

## Area Bloggers



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# Age Spots by Jackie Dover - An Ounce of Protection - Flu Shot Time

OCTOBER 03RD 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

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## **An Ounce of Prevention**

I was recently at a health fair and the Aging Matters booth was next to the Cape County Health Department booth. They were giving flu shots and people were lining up. Already we are in flu season, I thought the last flu season just ended.

For many people the flu is only a minor inconvenience; some coughing, sneezing, body aches for a bit and they move on. For some, particularly seniors the flu can be much worse.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention it is estimated that between about 70 percent and 85 percent of seasonal flu-related deaths have occurred in people 65 years and older and between 54 percent and 70 percent of seasonal flu-related hospitalizations have occurred among people in that age group. Influenza is often quite serious for people 65 and older. The best protection from the flu is the flu shot. It is quick, relatively painless and Medicare Part B covers the cost at 100%. Getting a flu vaccine also protects those around you.

Other ways to protect yourself from the flu include washing your hands often, try to avoid sick people, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth and everyone cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze or cough. Even with all the precautions if you begin showing symptoms of the flu, go see your doctor!

Another vaccine that is important for seniors to get is the pneumococcal vaccine. Speaking from personal experience, pneumonia is awful. The pneumococcal vaccine not only protects against pneumonia, but also meningitis, bronchitis and a bloodstream infection called bacteremia among other infections. This shot is usually administered only once to those 65 and older and Medicare Part B usually pays 100% of the costs.

Finally, the shingles vaccine; anyone who had chickenpox is at risk of getting shingles. If you know someone who had shingles, you know how painful they can be. Shingles cause painful blisters that usually crust over in 7-10 days. The pain and discomfort of shingles is extreme for most people. There are two types of shingles vaccines and you need to speak with your doctor to see which is best for you. Medicare Part D covers the vaccine so cost will vary by plan.

Now you must know that I am not a doctor and every situation is different. Please speak with your doctor to determine what vaccine is right for you and when is the best time to get them.

An ounce of prevention in this case is really worth a pound of cure. Your health is something that needs protected and vaccines can help.

For questions on what Medicare will cover, please call Aging Matters 573-335-3331 or 800-392-8771.

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