

# Flu shot may curb respiratory infections in people with heart failure

February 2 2017

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(HealthDay)—Flu and pneumonia vaccines may reduce heart failure

patients' risk of dangerous respiratory infections, a new review suggests.

More than 5 million Americans have heart failure, when the heart is too weak to pump enough blood to meet the body's needs. Respiratory infections are the leading cause of hospitalization for people with heart failure. These infections are associated with high death rates in a hospital, the review authors said.

The researchers reviewed studies published from January 1990 to July 2016. These studies suggested that flu and pneumonia vaccines seem to help protect people with heart failure from life-threatening respiratory infections.

People older than 65 with heart failure may benefit more from high-dose vaccination, the researchers said.

"Vaccination represents a low-cost intervention that may be able to prevent the significant disease, death and cost associated with heart failure," said senior author Dr. Robert Mentz, an assistant professor of medicine at Duke University School of Medicine in Durham, N.C.

But, the evidence is still limited, Mentz's team said. That's because most vaccination clinical trials either haven't included heart failure patients or haven't looked at the impact of vaccines in heart failure patients.

More research is needed, the authors said.

The review was published Feb. 1 in the journal *JACC: Heart Failure*.

"A deeper understanding of current vaccination practices within the heart failure population is necessary to guide population-level interventions aimed at improving [vaccination rates](#)," Mentz said in a journal news release.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends yearly flu vaccination for adults with heart failure. Heart societies such as the American College of Cardiology also advise an annual flu shot. The ACC also recommends pneumonia vaccination for people with [heart failure](#).

**More information:** The U.S. National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute has more on [heart failure](#).

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