

Study shows that vaccination against RSV lowers the risk of hospitalization in people over 60

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A team of doctors and medical researchers from Vanderbilt University Medical Center and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has

found that vaccinating people 60 years and older against the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) substantially reduces their chances of being hospitalized if they are infected.

In their project, [reported](#) in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, the group studied the medical records of thousands of older Americans.

As tensions around the world have eased regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, another virus has emerged as a threat to [older people](#)—[respiratory syncytial virus](#), more commonly known as RSV, which is normally thought of as a disease that impacts infants and toddlers.

In adults, it has symptoms similar to the common cold or sometimes the flu, and can lead to hospitalizations for older people and others with immune problems, particularly those with COPD. Those hospitalized can experience complications ranging from bronchitis to pneumonia.

In this new effort, the research team wondered if newly developed vaccinations, which are available to virtually all older people in the U.S., reduce symptoms in older people and the chances of being hospitalized.

To find out, the researchers analyzed medical record data for [patients](#) over 60 in 19 U.S. states who had participated in a surveillance network study over the months October 2023 to March 2024.

All the patients involved had been given nasal swabs to test for [viral infections](#) within 10 days of onset of symptoms. In all, the team was able to study the records of 2,978 patients who were over the age of 60 who had been admitted to a hospital for respiratory problems—367 of them turned out to be infected with RSV. Another 2,611 patients were used as a [control group](#).

The researchers found that those patients who had been vaccinated against RSV were significantly less likely to be hospitalized than those who had not—the protection was even greater for people over the age of 75.

More information: Diya Surie et al, RSV Vaccine Effectiveness Against Hospitalization Among US Adults 60 Years and Older, *JAMA* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jama.2024.15775](https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2024.15775)

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