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▶▶ November 2012 ◀◀

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Preventive Services Can Help Save Lives



Only 1 in 4 Americans between the ages of 50 and 64 get a core set of recommended preventive services. Protect your health by taking advantage of immunizations and chronic disease screenings.



One of the best and easiest ways for adults to keep clinical preventive designed to help Adult and pneumonia. physical activity measures.

themselves healthy is to make sure they get recommended services such as screenings and immunizations. Screenings are detect chronic diseases in their early, most treatable stages. immunizations help protect against diseases such as influenza Counseling to encourage healthy behaviors such as regular and refraining from tobacco use are also key prevention

By requiring recommended immunizations as a condition of school entry, our nation helps ensure that children are up to date on their preventive services. We do not have a similar system or impetus in place to ensure that adults get their recommended immunizations and screenings. However, given their potential to save lives, increasing the use of preventive services among adults is a critical public health priority.

"In the midst of a typical seasonal influenza epidemic, an extraterrestrial being walks into a hospital emergency room teeming with acutely ill older adults. Turning to the head nurse, he says, 'There must be no prevention for this illness.' She replies, 'We have an effective vaccine.' 'Then the vaccine must be in very scarce supply.' He counters, 'Oh no,' she replies, 'We have lots of it. It's in those bottles on that shelf.' Puzzled, he suggests, 'Well, it must be very expensive,' to which she says, 'No, it is very inexpensive, often free.' He replies, 'Well, can you explain to me why you don't prevent this disease in these people?' And to that, the head nurse replies, 'No, I can't, I just can't.'"

*John W. Rowe, MD,
Past President, The Gerontological Society of America*

American adults between the ages of 50 and 64 play multiple and important roles as spouses and partners, employees and employers, parents and caregivers, friends and contributing members of society. Staying healthy is essential to the fulfillment of these roles and reducing health care costs associated with chronic diseases and infectious diseases such as influenza and pneumonia.

The percentage of adults up to date on clinical preventive services is strikingly low. Only one in four of the nearly 55 million Americans between the ages of 50 and 64 receive the core set of recommended preventive services.

To focus national attention on the value of preventive services and opportunities to close gaps in their delivery, CDC has released a report highlighting the extent to which individuals aged 50 to 64 receive preventive services and effective strategies to increase their use. As Dr. Tom Frieden, the Director of CDC, says in the Foreword of the report, "It is time to focus on what many consider to be the low-hanging fruit offered through prevention by combining the forces of our healthcare system and communities to prevent disease and promote health."

Developed in collaboration with AARP and the American Medical Association, this report, "[Promoting Preventive Services for Adults 50-64: Community and Clinical Partnerships](#)," is now available online in an interactive version. Public health and aging network professionals, policy makers, the media, researchers, and others will find valuable information related to preventive services for both the nation and for individual states and selected communities.