

What seniors need to know about fall vaccines

Dear Savvy Senior,

With a longtime vaccine critic leading the nation's health departments, can you give me updated information on which vaccines are recommended for Medicare seniors this fall?

Medicare Mary

Dear Mary,

Even though the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is undergoing major cultural changes and upheaval, the overall fall vaccine recommendations for "older adults" resembles last year, with exception of the Covid shot. Here's what you should know.

Just as they normally do, the CDC recommends a seasonal flu shot to everyone 6 months of age and older, but it's especially important for older adults who have weaker immune defenses and have a greater risk of developing dangerous flu complications compared with younger, healthy adults.

For people age 65 and older, there are three different FDA approved flu vaccines (you only need one) that are recommended over traditional flu shots. These include: the Fluzone High-Dose Quadrivalent, Flublok Quadrivalent (recombinant, egg free vaccine), and Fluvad Quadrivalent.

These vaccines are formulated to create a more robust immune response, helping the body produce more antibodies, which makes them more effective in preventing the flu.

All flu vaccines are covered 100 percent by Medicare Part B as long as your doctor, health clinic or pharmacy agrees not to charge you more than Medicare pays.

In addition to the flu shot, the CDC also recommends a single-dose of RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) vaccine for all adults age 75 and older, as well as to high-risk adults between ages 50 and 74. These are people who have chronic heart or lung disease, weakened immune systems, diabetes with complications, severe obesity, or who live in long-term care facilities.

RSV is responsible for 6,000 to 10,000 deaths and up to 150,000 hospitalizations each year.

The three RSV vaccines approved and available in the U.S. – Arexvy, Abrysvo and mResvia – are all covered under Medicare (Part D) prescription drug plans. But note that if you got an RSV shot last year, or when it first became available in 2023, you do not need to get a second dose this year. For now, only one dose of RSV vaccine is recommended.



If you haven't had a Covid booster shot lately, the Food and Drug Administration recently approved the 2025–2026 Covid19 vaccine, which has been updated to target the dominant strain.

This vaccine has been recommended for all adults 65 and older and younger people that have a health condition that makes them vulnerable to severe Covid. But the new, CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices just announced that they are no longer recommending Covid shots. Instead, they are recommending 65 and older adults and immunocompromised younger people should decide individually or with a doctor.

Covid still causes at least 40,000 hospitalizations and approximately 47,000 deaths in the U.S. each year. Covid shots are covered by Medicare Part B.

If you haven't been vaccinated for pneumonia, you should also consider getting the pneumococcal vaccine this fall. These vaccines are now recommended by the CDC to adults age 50 and older, instead of age 65, which was the previous recommendation.

Pneumonia causes a whopping 1.2 million people to visit medical emergency departments in the U.S. each year and causes roughly 50,000 deaths.

If you've never been vaccinated for pneumonia, the PCV20 (Prevnar 20) or PCV21 (Capvaxine) are the top choices because they cover the most common serotypes.

Medicare Part B covers pneumococcal shots, and you only need to get it once.

You should be aware that all these vaccines can cause mild side effects like pain or tenderness where you got the shot, muscle aches, headache, fever or fatigue.

Also note that it's safe to receive these vaccines at the same time, but it may be best to spread them out a week or two because multiple vaccinations on the same day may cause increased side effects.

Send your questions or comments to questions@savvysenior.org, or to Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070.



80 Proof Alice, with members Tyson Lesage on guitar, Jason Riegel on banjo and Aimee Riegel on bass, perform at the 53rd Walnut Valley Festival in September.

It's a small, small world after all

Here's a great story that started before the annual Walnut Valley Festival, continued during the festival, and then finished up a week after the festival.

I love stories that take on a life of their own.

It's even better when the story is perfect to share with others...so here goes.

It was a week before the Walnut Valley, and when your daily life is anchored in a small town (or several small towns, in my case) you should never be surprised by the questions or comments you get presented with.

As I recall, I was delivering a deposit for the business at Citizens State Bank in Cheney and started talking about the festival as I took care of business. Shayla Satterlee, who has worked at the bank for a number of years, overheard the conversation and shared the following suggestion:

"You need to go hear 80 Proof Alice," she said. "They're really good."

Shayla noted that she had grown up with the lead singer for the band and her husband, the band's banjo player. This was going to be a break-through moment for the band to perform on the festival's main stages, and she was really excited for them.

Over five decades as a working journalist, I've stumbled across good stories with less inspiration or motivation. Something told me this was a tip to pursue, so when I got back out to my truck I did what I always do...I wrote a note on a scrap of paper and clipped it

From the Editor's Files



to my visor.

Just days later, Kim and I participated in this year's pre-festival events, secured our campsite, and settled in for our first night in the camper leading up to the 53rd Annual Walnut Valley Festival. That night, in the peace and quiet that would soon be broken with all-night campfire jams, we checked out the entertainer profiles

for this year's festival. And there they were – 80 Proof Alice and the band's three members, Aimee Riegel on bass and lead vocals, husband Jason Riegel on banjo, and Tuson Lesage on guitar.

Now the story gets even more small world...even before 80 Proof Alice was set to perform any of its main stage performances over the festival's five days.

Kim and I love the days on the Winfield Fairgrounds leading up to the festival. They're more laid-back as people get settled into their camps, and you can still hear some amazing music. That Saturday night, we decided to spend much of the evening at Stage 11, an unofficial but popular stage in the Pecan Grove. The night closed

out with Rudy and the Lost Boys, and two of the "Lost Boys" just happened to be Aimee and Jason Riegel.

That is the true essence of the bluegrass festival, as musicians – some headed to the main stages in just a few days – share their talents with friends, other bands, and any campsite that might appreciate and benefit from their talents.

From there, Kim and I heard several incredible performances by 80 Proof Alice during the festival. Before I left for home on Sunday afternoon, I caught their final set on Stage I, bought a CD, and let the band know that I wanted to do an interview as soon as we could after the festival.

We did that interview this past Sunday, and visited like old friends discussing a shared topic that we all love. Aimee and Jason talked about being friends with Shayla and husband Mike Satterlee years ago as they all grew up in Great Bend, Kan. Aimee and Jason were dating, and so were Shayla and Mike, and they all were close friends. Aimee and Shayla were in each other's weddings.

The night of the interview, we all talked about how the bluegrass world is a tight family, and how "small world" experiences are just a natural part of this unique family.

That circle will just get even tighter when I can share the story of 80 Proof Alice with our readers.

Editor's note: Watch for the story of 80 Proof Alice and more tales from the Walnut Valley Festival in the November issue of the East Wichita News and WestSide Story, which will be included in this newspaper in early November.



Aimee Riegel has a soulful and powerful voice, and was "riding pretty high" from the band's experiences during the festival.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

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LEGAL NOTICE
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Zoning Appeals of the City of Conway Springs, Sumner County, State of Kansas, will hold a public hearing on October 23, 2025, at 6:00 P.M., at City Hall, 208 W. Spring Street, Conway Springs, Kansas. The hearing is to consider the appeal of Matt Pierce (applicant), concerning the property located at 220 N 4th Street. The applicant requests for the Board of Zoning Appeals to allow storing of camper and boat on the road.

The notice of this hearing is published in accordance with Kansas Statute § 12759. A complete legal description of the property and the full application are available for public inspection at City Hall, during normal office hours. All interested persons may appear at the hearing and be heard regarding the appeal. Written statements may be submitted to the Board of Zoning Appeals prior to or at the hearing.

By order of the Board of Zoning Appeals,

/s/ Ryan Crowell, Chairperson
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