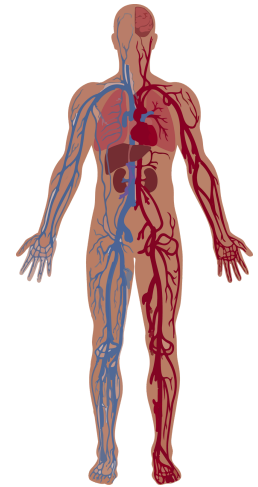


What are the added benefits of vaccination?

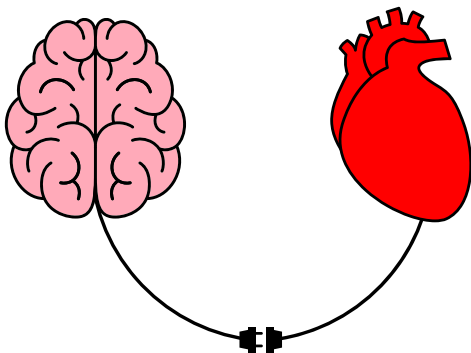
Vaccination does more than prevent infection

Many people know that vaccines protect against serious infections like influenza (flu), pneumonia, and shingles. What is less widely known is that some routine adult vaccines may also help **protect your heart and your brain**.

Based on evidence reviewed in the [Management of Brain–Heart Multimorbidity](#) clinical practice guideline developed by the *Canadian Cardiovascular Harmonized National Guideline Endeavour (C-CHANGE)*, we now know that vaccines can help prevent cardiovascular disease and stroke.



The heart and brain are connected



The heart and brain are closely linked. Conditions that affect blood vessels—such as inflammation, clotting, and plaque buildup—can increase the risk of:

- heart attacks (myocardial infarction)
- stroke
- cognitive decline and dementia

Certain infections can trigger these harmful processes. For example, influenza and pneumococcal infections can cause inflammation, damage blood vessels, and increase the risk of blood clots. Preventing these infections can help lower the risk of serious heart and brain events.

What are the added benefits of vaccination?

Vaccines with added heart and brain benefits

Research shows that some routine adult vaccines provide protection beyond infection prevention.

Pneumococcal (pneumonia) vaccine	Influenza (flu) vaccine	Herpes zoster (shingles) vaccine
Getting immunized against pneumococcal disease leads to: • fewer heart attacks • fewer strokes • lower cardiovascular mortality Benefits are seen especially in older adults and people with existing cardiovascular risk factors.	Strong evidence shows the flu vaccine reduces: • cardiovascular death rates • heart attacks • stroke Studies in older adults and people with heart disease show that the flu vaccine reduces serious cardiovascular events. Research also suggests the flu vaccine may reduce the risk of dementia.	Getting immunized against shingles is linked to a lower risk of: • stroke • heart attack Growing evidence also suggests a possible reduction in dementia risk—large studies have shown these benefits clearly.

Who benefits most?

Vaccination against influenza, pneumococcal disease, and shingles is recommended for **all adults**, with particular benefit for people who:

- **are 65 years or older**
- have heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, or high cholesterol
- have had a previous heart attack or stroke
- have multiple chronic health conditions



What are the added benefits of vaccination?

What about other vaccines?



At the time of the guideline review, there was not enough evidence to recommend COVID-19 or RSV vaccines specifically for heart or brain protection. Research is ongoing, and recommendations may evolve as new data becomes available.

Why does this matter?

Vaccines are:

- **low risk**
- **cost-effective**
- widely available

Vaccination prevents infections that can trigger heart and brain problems. Staying healthy includes healthy eating, physical activity, medications, regular medical care—and vaccination.



Key takeaway

Vaccination is not just about avoiding infection. It is a practical, powerful way to help protect your heart, your brain, and your long-term health.

Talk to your healthcare provider about which vaccines you need, and how staying up to date on your vaccinations can support both your cardiovascular health and your cognitive well-being.