

Senior Vaccinations

Introduction:

Years ago-vaccination was a pediatric issue

COVID turned it into a political issue

Social media regards it as a conspiracy issue

History:

Jenner in 1860's discovered cowpox exposure blocked smallpox

Polio in 1950's Salk and Sabin-last wild polio in USA in 1979

Herd immunity-if 95% of population immune, disease dies out

Influenza:

Old-vaccine vs Spring China flu epidemic—vaccine vs US Fall flu outbreak

Warp speed-Trump: mRNA technique lead to rapid vaccine development

2023-24: 28K deaths in US from flu, 19K in those over 65-about 75%

Flu season-Sept-May in US; takes 2 weeks to develop immunity; lasts 6-8 m

Seniors get hi dose vaccine to increase immune response; result over 70%

COVID: same death rate as flu; immunity lasts weeks, not months

RSV: Respiratory Syncytial Virus, new vaccine; disease of infants that is severe in seniors; vaccine lasts more than a year

Shingles: vaccine 91% effective

Pneumovax: effective against commonest cause of bacterial pneumonia

Conclusion: except for shingles, there is no proven antiviral treatment for any of the above infections; vaccination is the only effective way to avoid illness