

Should You Even Bother Getting a Flu Shot?

It's fall, and health officials are beginning their yearly push to convince Americans to get the latest version of the flu shot.

Last year's vaccine was a tremendous dud—a new strain of H3N2 influenza emerged after the vaccine was formulated, and the shot was a poor match. Even the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) admitted it did little to protect against flu.

This year's vaccine has been designed to protect against the new H3N2 strain, and the CDC hopes it will be a good match for this year's virus, although the agency admitted in a recent advisory that it's impossible to predict the upcoming flu season.

Should you get the new vaccine? The CDC says “yes,” and CDC Director Tom Frieden, M.D., got his yearly shot during a news conference meant to convince others to follow suit.

Not so fast, says holistic family physician David Brownstein, M.D. “In the past, the flu vaccine hasn't worked for most of us, and there's no indication that it will this year,” he tells *Newsmax Health*.

“The flu vaccine has been around for over 30 years, and there is not one single study showing that any flu vaccine has helped prevent the flu in the majority who receive it,” says Dr. Brownstein, author of the newsletter *Dr. Brownstein's Natural Way to Health*.

“Nor has it been shown to prevent flu complications, such as pneumonia, hospitalizations and death, in well over 90 percent who receive it. As usual, they are taking their best guess as

to which strain of flu will be predominant, but they have no way of being sure," he says.

Even when the flu vaccine matches the circulating strains of influenza, the shot performs poorly, and does not offer 100 percent protection, Dr. Brownstein argues.

"Whether they are right or wrong, the cases of flu are about the same whether the vaccine is a good match or not because flu shots don't work," he says. "A review of 50 studies that included more than 70,000 adults found that 100 people needed to be vaccinated to avoid one case of flu. That means the vaccine failed 99 percent who took it—they received no benefit at preventing the flu."

Although seniors are especially urged to get the flu shot, some experts say it doesn't protect older people, and the government knows it.

Investigative reporter Sharyl Attkisson says the government has ignored numerous studies showing the vaccine was ineffective in the elderly, and a 10-year-old study was ignored because the results weren't what were expected.

"It found that after decades and billions of dollars spent promoting flu shots for the elderly, the mass vaccination program did not result in saving lives," Attkisson wrote. "In fact, the death rate among the elderly increased substantially."

Dr. Brownstein agrees.

"There are no good studies showing that the flu vaccine is effective for seniors," he says. "When you take apart and break down a recent study that the government uses to promote the flu vaccine to senior citizens, you'll find that 217 elderly people had to take the high-dose flu vaccine to prevent a single case of flu – that's a 99 percent failure.

“In addition, every single person was exposed to possible adverse effects. It’s vital to always bear in mind that the flu vaccine can cause side effects, including Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS), and has been linked with narcolepsy in children and an increased risk of Alzheimer’s.”

He also points to a study published in the *International Journal of Obesity* which found that flu shots aren’t effective in obese people.

Johns Hopkins scientist Peter Doshi, says that although the vaccines are being pushed on the public in record numbers, they are less effective and cause more side effects than admitted by the CDC.

Dr. Brownstein also notes some formulation of the flu shot contain trace elements of mercury and formaldehyde. Although CDC and other health authorities say these preservatives are at levels so low they pose no harm, Dr. Brownstein disagrees.

“There is simply no justification for injecting any living being with mercury or formaldehyde, especially pregnant women,” he says. “I guess I could encourage people to get vaccinated if the flu vaccine actually worked and did not contain toxic additives, such as mercury and formaldehyde. But it doesn’t work, and it does contain toxins, so I advise people to avoid it.

“There’s no real reason to believe that this year’s vaccine is going to be any better than in the past.”

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