

Dear Friends,

You may have heard and read about the fact that the 2014 influenza vaccine does not protect against some of the subtypes of the influenza virus (H3N2), and it has been reported by the CDC to be 45% of these new subtypes. **THAT DOES NOT MEAN YOU SHOULD NOT GET A FLU SHOT THIS YEAR, ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE IN THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:**

1. Hospitalized patients
2. Anyone 65 years of age or over. (THERE IS A STRONGER FLU SHOT FOR THIS CATEGORY).
3. Anyone with any chronic disease including those with respiratory disease (COPD, asthma), cardiovascular disease, kidney, liver disease, diabetes, blood disease, cancer, neurologic disorders, retardation, or disabled.
4. Anyone immunosuppressed.
5. Females who are pregnant, or just have delivered within 2 weeks.
6. Younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long term aspirin therapy.
7. American Indians/Alaskans
8. Anyone obese (BMI 40 or greater).
9. Those in nursing facilities

Healthcare workers or caregivers (this is my suggestion, but must be decided by your doctor).

Although, I have reported that Tamiflu (oseltamir) has little effectiveness unless given within 48 hours of symptoms beginning, the CDC still recommends it. They state that it could help and may be the difference between surviving the flu and dying.

It has also been stated by the CDC that this H3N2 virus, whether covered by the vaccine or not, is a particularly mean virus, and they are expecting more severe cases and possibly more deaths this year. It should also be noted, that the flu shot may not give you complete resistance to getting the flu, but hopefully if you get the flu, it will be less severe.

The flu vaccine contains 55% of the H3N2 subtypes, influenza B, and H1 subtypes.

There is another **option to Tamiflu called Relenza** (zanamivir). This may be preferred, but that is up to your doctor. These require prescriptions.

Talk to your doctor about getting a flu shot. If you are allergic to eggs, you might not be eligible.

BE SMART AND CALL YOUR DOCTOR.