

How effective is this season s flu vaccine?

By ACSH Staff — February 21, 2014



Each year, the CDC [estimates the](#) ^[1] effectiveness of the

current season s flu vaccine. They collected data from about 2300 children and adults in the U.S. Influenza Vaccine Effectiveness Network from December 2013 to January 2014. All patients presented with a medically attended acute respiratory illness and had not been treated with antiviral medication. Of those individuals, 34 percent tested positive for influenza with vaccination rates ranging from 38 to 48 percent across different sites. Researchers found that the current vaccine reduces risk of infection by 60 percent.

The CDC recommends that everyone six months of age and older get vaccinated against influenza. However, as of mid-November, only 34 percent of adults ages 18 to 64, 41 percent of children ages 6 months to 17 years and 62 percent of adults 65 and older had been vaccinated. Furthermore, the majority of hospitalizations this flu season (60 percent) have occurred in adults ages 18 to 64.

Flu activity continues to be elevated in the United States, as of February 8th, and activity may continue to increase in some parts of the country. Therefore, the CDC and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommend that vaccination efforts continue. In fact, California has recorded one of the state s worst flu seasons in recent years.

And on a vaccination-related note, Fordham University in New York City has [reported a](#) ^[2] mumps outbreak affecting at least 13 students. The university requires that incoming students receive the mumps vaccine, among others, but authorities are looking into possible causes of this outbreak.

ACSH s Dr. Elizabeth Whelan comments: With the continuation of flu season, it s important that individuals 6 months of age and older be vaccinated it s not too late! A reduced risk of infection of 60 percent is nothing to ignore, especially since there is absolutely no downside to vaccination. And of course, with regards to the outbreak of mumps at Fordham, it s a no-brainer that all children should receive the MMR vaccine at the appropriate time. In fact, if I were a Fordham student, I d probably want to get a booster MMR now.

Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2014/02/21/effective-seasons-flu-vaccine>

Links

[1] http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6307a1.htm?s_cid=mm6307a1_e

[2] http://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2014/02/20/Mumps-outbreak-reported-at-Fordham-University/UPI-55251392951782/