

## Get the flu shot for the person next to you



You may have heard on the news lately information about flu predictions and the actual efficacy of this year's flu shot.

First, the CDC flu surveillance network reported in early December that four states had widespread flu activity. At the same time last year, there were none. This is a sign the flu season is starting sooner than normal.

The dominant strain of flu being reported is H3N2. That strain of influenza can be more severe than others, which means sicker people, more hospitalizations, and more deaths from flu.

Experts at the CDC can make predictions about seasonal flu by studying what happens in Australia. While we are sunning ourselves in the summer, it's not only winter "down under," but it's their flu season as well. A little over 159,000 more cases were diagnosed this year than that of last year in Australia, and the dominant strain was H3N2.

You may have heard this in the news and that also, the flu vaccine used in Australia is the same as the one we in the US are using this year, and its effectiveness against H3N2 was only 10%. Some may wonder why get the flu shot at all if it's not going to be effective against this year's dominant strain?

### ***Here are a couple reasons why you still need to get a flu shot:***

- ◀ Other types of flu circulate, and you'll be protected from 50-70 percent of other types of flu.
- ◀ You will be less sick if you have the flu shot and catch the flu, than if you didn't.
- ◀ If you're 50 or older, or if you have relatives who you interact with frequently who are this age, or work caring for people in this age group, you will want to get a flu shot. After older people get the flu, they can have an inflammatory response two to eight weeks after getting over the flu. This inflammation in the body can cause older adults to have an increased risk for stroke and heart attack. That's because, says an expert at the CDC's flu surveillance network, influenza not only affects sinuses, lungs, and throat. It affects the whole body, including the blood vessels of your brain and heart. If those get inflamed, it can cause bigger problems than a week in bed with body aches and a fever.
- ◀ Healthy people die from flu each year. A teen athlete died last year, and a CDC study showed that three-quarters of the children who died from flu from 2010-2014 had not been vaccinated.

**Get your flu shot. If you don't want to get it for yourself, get it for the person next to you.**