

2019-2020 Flu Season – What You Need to Know to Prevent the Flu

By George Gey, MD and Jeanette Dunn, RN, EdD

This year the CDC is recommending Influenza vaccinations for 65+ year-old persons who have no contraindications, such as egg allergy and/or severe reactions to flu vaccines. For those with egg allergies, there are now cell-based vaccines which are not produced in eggs. All the regular dose vaccines are quadrivalent (includes A/Brisbane (H1N1), A/Kansas (H3N2), B/Victoria, and B/Yamagata. The effectiveness is 40-60 % to lessen the flu illness.

There is a nasal spray with four **attenuated live** viruses (a quadrivalent vaccine). The evaluation of the attenuated flu virus vaccine used during the 2017-2018 flu season was only 3% effective in preventing flu illness.

The new quadrivalent **dead** virus vaccine includes A/Brisbane (H1N1), A/Kansas (H3N2), B/Victoria, and B/Yamagata. You can check with your health care provider which vaccine is recommended for you. Having a flu shot each year helps to maintain your resistance. Remember the flu virus changes with each flu season. Prevention is even more important at the end of the season.

More information can be obtained at [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) web site on what illnesses are prevalent around the world.

A web site that offers epidemiological information for your area is: <http://www.Flunearyou.org>, if you are interested. It may be important to avoid areas where large numbers of people congregate when flu is prevalent.

Remember to cover your cough, stay home if you have flu symptoms, and call your health care provider. There are antiviral medications which can treat flu if taken early. Be a real friend and do not spread the flu if you are ill.