

The Truth about the Flu Shot

1. What's in the regular flu shot?

• Egg protein and avian contaminant viruses	• Thimerosal (mercury): in multi-dose vials	• Polysorbate 80: allergen; infertility in mice
• Formaldehyde: carcinogen	• Triton X100: detergent	• Sucrose: table sugar
• Resin: known allergen	• Gentamycin: antibiotic	• Gelatin: known allergen

2. Do flu shots work?

• **Not in healthy babies:** A review of 51 studies involving more than 294,000 children it was found there was "no evidence that injecting children 6-24 months of age with a flu shot was any more effective than placebo. In children over 2 yrs, it was only effective 33% of the time in preventing the flu. **Reference:** "Vaccines for preventing influenza in healthy children." The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. 2 (2008).

• **Not in children with asthma:** A study 800 children with asthma, half were vaccinated and the other half did not receive the influenza vaccine. The two groups were compared with respect to clinic visits, emergency department (ED) visits, and hospitalizations for asthma. **CONCLUSION:** This study failed to provide evidence that the influenza vaccine prevents pediatric asthma exacerbations. **Reference:** "Effectiveness of influenza vaccine for the prevention of asthma exacerbations." Christly, C. et al. Arch Dis Child. 2004 Aug;89(8):734-5.

• **Not in children with asthma (2):** "The inactivated flu vaccine does not prevent influenza-related hospitalizations in children, especially the ones with asthma... In fact, children who get the flu vaccine are *three times more at risk for hospitalization* than children who do not get the vaccine." **Reference:** The American Thoracic Society's 105th International Conference, May 15-20, 2009, San Diego.

• **Not in adults:** In a review of 48 reports (more than 66,000 adults), "Vaccination of healthy adults only reduced risk of influenza by 6% and reduced the number of missed work days by less than one day (0.16) days. It did not change the number of people needing to go to hospital or take time off work." **Reference:** "Vaccines for preventing influenza in healthy adults." The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. 1 (2006).

• **Not in the Elderly:** In a review of 64 studies over 98 flu seasons of elderly living in nursing homes, flu shots were non-significant for preventing the flu. For elderly living in the community, vaccines were not (significantly) effective against influenza, ILI or pneumonia. **Reference:** "Vaccines for preventing influenza in the elderly." The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. 3(2006).