**The Flu Vaccine 2014/2015 and maintaining a healthy immune system year round.**

**–Dr. Jared Anderson**



The 2014-2015 flu season is in full effect and just like every year, fear fills the air. This year though you have many more vaccines to choose from, and many are even recommending two shots for young kids just to wish them better luck for some temporary immunity. Also starting last year there is an additional viral strain to most flu shots; in the past there were always three types of viruses, this year you get an extra for free. (Is it free?)

Speaking of free, the new Obamacare health laws now in effect for most Americans gives you a “free” flu vaccine as part of your mandatory health insurance. It’s part of the prevention package, but of course that depends on what you consider prevention. I certainly don’t consider getting a flu vaccine any sort of prevention, so I will choose not to get the shot this year even though they’re made so convenient – just go to your local pharmacy drive-thru and stick your arm out the window. Maybe soon Burger King and McDonalds will offer them to save us even more time.

Flu vaccines weaken the immune system and many times actually make a person more predisposed to illnesses. The vaccine can put one’s health at great risk – from the chance of developing Guillain-Barre syndrome, (a neurological disease that can result in death), to immune system complications such as allergies, autoimmune diseases, and ear infections. Toxicity issues are associated with many of the vaccines given today, as mercury and formaldehyde are still present in many shots. Several chemical preservatives are in them too.

So should you get the shot – or not? Do you know there are several types of vaccines, all with various risks? Only 20 years ago, 32 million doses of influenza vaccine were available in the United States on an annual basis. Today, the total has skyrocketed to 135 million doses.

**Should You Get the Flu Shot?**

I’m not here to tell you whether you should, or should not, get the flu shot. Actually, nobody should tell you to get a flu shot (or not get one) and that includes your own primary care physician. I believe in informed consent and an individual making an informed decision based upon unbiased information they have been provided and researched themselves. Unfortunately, most people don’t know much about the flu vaccine other than what the media, their friend, or their doctor tells them, so they think there is nothing wrong with receiving the flu shot. They’re told it will prevent the flu and comes without any risk; or the ever popular claim “catching the flu will be much, much worse than getting sick from the shot.”

It’s come to a sad point in our health care system where mandatory vaccination polices have been enacted, often in healthcare facilities, forcing some people to take the vaccine or lose their job.

The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older as the first and most important step in protecting against this serious disease. Yes, it is “the most important step.” Eating well and taking other measures to stay healthy (such as washing your hands) are not as important to the CDC. Did you know there’s only one vaccine (shot) approved for your child under three years old and even the others have their own approved age group ranges? Unfortunately this shot for your infant will come with some formaldehyde, and that’s highly toxic to all, especially little ones. Most people don’t know that there are several different types of flu vaccines and some are clearly worse than others. Most never know which one they already got. Interestingly, those people specifically advised to get vaccinated, the “immune compromised” such as children and the elderly, show little if any benefit from being vaccinated. And those with asthma, another target group, can often have their symptoms exacerbated by a flu vaccine.

The drug companies also note that it is not known whether their vaccine is excreted in human milk. Since many drugs are excreted in human milk, they advise caution when administering the vaccine to a nursing woman. It is also not known whether the drugs can cause fetal harm or how they affect reproduction capacity in women. Furthermore, the vaccines have not been evaluated for carcinogenic or mutagenic potential, or for impairment of fertility. Yet, the CDC continues to recommend all pregnant women get the flu shot since they too are “high risk.” Are you scratching your head yet?

**The 2014-2015 Flu Vaccine: So many to choose from**

Each year, federal health agency officials try to guess which three flu strains are most likely to be prevalent in the U.S. the following year to determine which strains will be included in that following year’s flu vaccine. New this flu season is the quadrivalent vaccine, which adds an additional strain to the flu shot. When the match between the vaccine and circulating viruses is close, the flu vaccine is thought to provide a 70-90% chance of temporary immunity to selected strains in healthy persons less than 65 years old. (The only way to get natural and permanent immunity to a strain of flu is to recover naturally from the flu.) For those over 65 years old, which is one of the target groups, the efficacy rate drops to a mere 30-40%. It is however considered to be 50-60% effective in preventing hospitalization or pneumonia and 80% effective in preventing death from flu caused by the covered strains.

However, many disagree with the studies behind the effectiveness of the flu vaccines. Dr. Russell Blaylock, a neurosurgeon, says, “It doesn’t even work. The vaccine is completely worthless, and the government knows it. There are three reasons the government tells the elderly why they should get flu shots: secondary pneumonia, hospitalization, and death. Yet a study by the Cochrane group studied hundreds of thousands of people and found it offered zero protection for those three things in the general community. It offered people in nursing homes some immunity against the flu — at best one-third — but that was only if they picked the right vaccine.”

The vaccine typically contains two type A and one type B strain (2 type B for the new quadrivalent vaccines). This year’s winners are:

* A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)–like virus; (this is the same as the 2012/2013 vaccine)
* A/Victoria/361/2011 (H3N2)-like virus; (also the same as the 2012/2013 vaccine)
* B/Massachusetts/2/2012–like virus
* Quadrivalent vaccines will include an additional vaccine virus strain, a B/Brisbane/60/2008–like virus

The names do look strange, (and mean nothing special if you live in CA or MA), and two of the viruses used to make the 2013-2014 flu vaccine are the same as what was in the 2012-2013 vaccine. Though, as noted above, that immunity is most likely gone already if you got last year’s shot. But if you got the flu last year you should be immune to those strains (of course that’s assuming you got those specific viral strains, which is impossible to know).

So how accurate is this year’s vaccine? Uh, well, – we’ll know that at the end of the flu season.

There are many vaccines this 2014-2015 season. There are a couple new companies putting their vaccines on the market and many of the typical shots are now being offered in the quadrivalent form. Each drug also contains residual amounts of egg proteins (ovalbumin), except for the new Flu Blok vaccine. If you’re allergic to egg, you might not want to shoot any of these but the Flu Blok into your veins. Most of the vaccines contain many other preservatives. Thimerosal (mercury) is used in manufacturing of the drugs but some companies remove it before completion. **\*One dose of thimerosal exceeds the EPA’s safety limit of mercury exposure by over 250 times.**

Note that due to many of these companies having different sizes of single and multi-dose vaccines, there are actually 20 different vaccines available for the 2014-2015 season: eighteen inactivated, one recombinant (FluBlok), and one live (FluMist). Choose wisely!

* [**Afluria**](http://www.drgangemi.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Afluria-2013-2014.pdf) (CSL Limited)
  + Mercury? Yes – in multi-dose (24.5mcg)
  + Formaldehyde? No
  + Age – approved ages 5 and up
* [**Fluarix Quadrivalent**](http://www.drgangemi.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Fluarix-2013-2014.pdf) (GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals)
  + Mercury? No
  + Formaldehyde? Yes (5mcg)
  + Age – approved ages 3 and up with recommendations of two doses for kids ages 3-8
* [**FluLaval Quadrivalent**](http://www.drgangemi.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Flulaval-2013-2014.pdf) (ID Biomedical Corporation; distributed by GSK)
  + Mercury? Yes (<25mcg)
  + Formaldehyde? Yes (≤25 mcg),
  + Age – approved ages 3 and up with recommendations of two doses for kids ages 3-8
* [**Fluvirin**](http://www.drgangemi.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Fluvirin-2013-2014.pdf) (Novartis Vaccines and Diagnostics Limited)
  + Mercury? Yes – in multi-dose (25mcg); (≤ 1 mcg mercury per 0.5-mL single)
  + Formaldehyde? No
  + Age – approved ages 4-16 only, with recommendations of two doses for kids ages 4 to 8 years old
* [**Fluzone**](http://www.drgangemi.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Fluzone-2013-2014.pdf): Fluzone High-Dose and Fluzone Intradermal (Sanofi Pasteur) and Quadrivalent
  + Mercury? No, removed in the 2013-2014 Quadrivalent except in the 5.0mL multi-dose vial
  + Formaldehyde? Yes (≤50 mcg),
  + Age – approved ages 6 months and up with recommendations of two doses for kids ages 6 mos. to 8 years old
* [**FluMist Quadrivalent**](http://www.drgangemi.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/FluMist-Quadrivalent-2013-2014.pdf) (Medimmune Vaccines Inc.)
  + Mercury? No
  + Formaldehyde? No
  + Age – approved ages 2-49 only; (Children younger than 5 years of age with recurrent wheezing and persons of any age with asthma may be at increased risk of wheezing following the administration of FluMist Quadrivalent)
  + Not approved for pregnant women
  + Live Virus!
  + Contains MSG
* [**Flucelvax**](http://www.drgangemi.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Flucelvax-2013-2014.pdf) (Novartis Vaccines)
  + Mercury? No
  + Formaldehyde? No
  + Age – approved ages 18 and older
  + Contains the detergent cetyltrimethylammonium
* [**FluBlok**](http://www.drgangemi.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/FluBlok-2013-2014.pdf) (Protein Sciences)
  + Mercury? No
  + Formaldehyde? No
  + Age – approved ages 18-49
  + Egg Free
  + Recombinant – made from cells from the fall armyworm (moth)

**How effective is Tamiflu?**

Hey, how about that Tamiflu? That is the drug available if you get the flu that blocks the enzyme neuraminidase. Neuraminidase inhibitor medications prevent new virus particles from being released, thus slowing or stopping the spread of the virus. On average, a person recovers 30% faster on Tamiflu. Common adverse drug reactions associated with Tamiflu include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and headache. Rare reactions include hepatitis and elevated liver enzymes. See how to naturally block the neuraminidase enzyme below.

\*\* This drug, Tamiflu, has been investigated for “missing information” and hiding the true outcomes of clinical trials.

I believe in maintaining a strong immune system through living a healthy life and taking natural preventive measures, and making choices, which promote health and well being. The flu shot is not part of this plan. Which leads me to my favorite part of this write up. How do we prevent flu from taking hold in our bodies and how can we prevent the flu and other viruses holistically.

**Healthy Tips to Avoid the Flu**

* -Avoid refined foods such as white sugars, (especially high fructose corn syrup), and flours which suppress the immune system
* -Avoid fake sweeteners such as Splenda and NutraSweet
* -Avoid “bad” fats partially hydrogenated oils.
* -Reduce the amount of omega 6 fats in your diet, which are in many packaged, baked, and fast foods. They’re the corn, soy, safflower, peanut, and yes even canola oil.
* -Eat organic fresh fruits and vegetables and lots of them
* -Drink plenty of pure filtered water
* -Limit caffeine intake (coffee, tea, chocolate, & soda of course because of the sugar too)
* -Check your vitamin D level and consider supplementing.
* -Exercise daily, at least 30 minutes. (Use a heart rate monitor and stay within you range based on your age)
* -Wash your hands frequently, especially after visiting public places
* -Get plenty of high quality sleep. (This will be part of a future article)

**Healthy Suggestions For Any Viral Infection**

* + 1. Take elderberry extract. The Israeli extract commonly referred to as Sambucal is proven to block the neuraminidase enzyme responsible for viral replication. This can be used for support during the cold season by taking 2 teaspoons, (1 teaspoon for children), 4 times a day. It can significantly reduce infection time. Some studies show that this can resolve flu symptoms in as fast as 2-3 days, compared to a typical 6-7 day infection period.
* Vitamin C?  I rarely find vitamin C in its common refined ascorbic acid form to be of any benefit to a person, other than to acidify their tissues, which can have its own advantages (and disadvantages). It’s more important is to eat plenty of organic, nutrient-rich fruits and vegetables to get all the natural phytonutrients found in the whole food. I also like Camu powder for its natural vitamin C content. I like the products Camu Supreme and Thera Supreme, available in my office (for patients). The mineral selenium is also known to help with the immune system and fight viruses. Typically 200mcg a day can be beneficial.
* Consider vitamin D supplementation (per the above recommended test) (I like D Mulsion from Biotics) as well as vitamin A. I typically use 10,000IU to 20,000IU of vitamin A per day in patients who show a need for it. Check with your doctor!
* I have also found rubbing your thymus reflex point to be beneficial. Your thymus is the master gland of your immune system and rubbing over this typically tender spot will help to support the organ’s function. The area to rub is on the right side of your body midline to your armpit at the level of your nipple. The area can be tender in a small place or as large as 3 inches vertical to 2 inches lengthwise. Rub out the tender areas in a firm, circular motion for 1-2 minutes, 4-5 times a day – or better yet, get someone to do it for you! It will feel tenderer than what you can do yourself!

**The flu vaccine is not the answer in preventing the flu. Staying healthy is.**

**If you have any comments or questions feel free to email me at** [**drjandersondc@gmail.com**](mailto:drjandersondc@gmail.com) **or visit our website at** [**www.premierwellnessutah.com**](http://www.premierwellnessutah.com) **.**