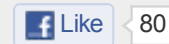


# Healthy Outlook Blog

## Good News About Fighting Flu

 Like 80

By Sue Russell | Posted October 11 2011

flu



Influenza is on everyone's radar with between five and 20 percent of Americans hit with it each year. Innovations in battling flu include tiny new vaccination needles, info on the protections of "social distancing," and promising advances towards a one-time-only flu shot.

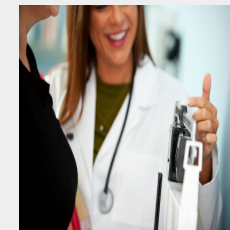
Vaccinations are the unchallenged champions of flu-

fighting; the first line of defense against the all too familiar misery of this highly contagious respiratory disease triggered by influenza viruses. And even if a given

### ABOUT OUR BLOG

Our blog is a collection of thoughts and stories that serve as inspiration for what healthymagination is—a shared commitment to creating better health for more people. It's written by the people behind healthymagination, as well as members of our advisory board and guest contributors from around the web.

### YOU MIGHT LIKE



#### [The Anti-Diet: Winning the War on Obesity](#)

The obesity problem is huge, literally. A new report funded by the CDC estimates that 42 percent of American adults could be obese by the year 2030, compared to 33.8 percent in 2007-2008. Obesity is responsible for staggering costs: an extra \$190 billion a year in healthcare and more than \$73 billion a year in lost

year's circulating strains don't perfectly match the vaccines, they can still help minimize symptoms and help prevent serious complications. "All individuals six months of age and older are now recommended to receive an influenza vaccine annually," says Christine B. Turley, MD, Vice Chair for Clinical Services at the University of Texas Medical Branch's Department of Pediatrics and a member of the Sealy Center for Vaccine Development.

Amended [recommendations](#) introduced last year "added all adults between 18 and 64 years old, regardless of their health," says Dr. Turley. "The expanded recommendations come after weighing the way that influenza is transmitted in communities, the risks of influenza to individuals and vulnerable populations, and the cost of influenza to society."

The new FDA-approved [vaccine formulation for 2011-2012](#) focuses on the three flu strains identified as the most likely troublemakers. They were identified using virus samples and patterns gathered by global surveillance systems and are identical to 2010-2011's strains. But that's no excuse for skipping another flu shot this fall. A vaccination's protection wanes over time, so it needs to be boosted annually.

While we don't yet have a flu shot "patch" (it's in the works), needle-haters will be delighted that the FDA green-lighted Sanofi Pasteur's [Fluzone Intradermal](#) vaccine. For people ages 18 to 64, the vaccine uses a tiny needle less than 1/10th of an inch long and goes just beneath the skin's surface rather than deep in the muscle. While the shot may trigger skin reactions at the injection site, says Dr. Turley, "these are typically mild. It should be very beneficial for individuals who have phobias about needles."

The flu research community has its eyes on the really big prize – a [universal flu shot](#), or one-shot-for-life. And it's moving closer, says Dr. Turley, who recently published the [results](#) of a human study on an experimental vaccine, VAX102, which targets the protein M2e found in all known strains of Influenza-A virus. A universal vaccine would be immensely important globally since annual flu shots are not available worldwide.

productivity.

## [10-Year-Old Twins Win Award for Hip-Hop Hand-Washing Routine](#)

Who knew that a rap song about hand hygiene could be so entertaining? Twin brothers Jerry and Josie Herman won the second annual Film Festival, held during the 39th Annual Educational Conference & Annual Meeting of the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology. Jerry spent several months at All Children's Hospital in St. [...]



## [Weight Loss May Reduce Inflammation and Disease Risk](#)

The takeaway, Dr. McTiernan says, is that losing 5 percent to 10 percent of excess weight is enough to significantly reduce the body's inflammation molecules, thereby reducing the risk of cancer and other diseases.

### POPULAR TOPICS

[Health](#)

[Health Tips](#)

[Lifestyle](#)

[Innovation](#)

[Health Information](#)

[Healthy Behaviors](#)

[Wellness](#)

[Everyday Health](#)

[Research](#)

[Technology](#)

“We were able to produce a strong immune response to a portion of the virus that could possibly be protective across many seasons,” says Dr. Turley. “A group in England has studied their vaccine in humans one step further, and the results of this study were promising in terms of the beneficial effects seen. The study of these vaccines are in early stages, but there is quite a bit of promise.”

By contrast, hand hygiene seems like Flu Prevention 101. However, in a [study](#) conducted in two Danish schools, three months of instructional intervention on hand hygiene resulted in significant drops in student absenteeism. Also, the increased education had a marked, lasting impact on the spread of infection.

You can help stave off many infectious diseases, not only influenza, simply by “covering one’s cough with your elbow,” says Dr. Turley, “washing your hands frequently, staying home when ill, keeping hands away from your face and mouth.”

Traveling can put you in the path of infection but that has less to do with germs in confined aircraft cabins than with contaminated surfaces, because influenza doesn’t hang around in the air.

“Travelers will touch many surfaces that can harbor viruses, and they may come in close contact with individuals that are incubating infections, but not yet sick themselves,” says Dr. Turley. “Person-to-person transmission is the most common way to get influenza, but the surfaces that individuals ‘christen’ with their influenza-laden secretions can cause others to become sick.” Getting vaccinated well before traveling gives the body time to develop a strong level of protection.

Of course, you can also go into hiding and distance yourself from others. Mexican authorities responded promptly to the 2009 A/H1N1 pandemic. Later, a [study](#) representing 40 percent of the population assessed patterns of flu-like illness, hospitalizations and deaths, by its waves and geographical regions. When social distancing measures were implemented – schools in the greater Mexico City area were

## OUR AUTHORS

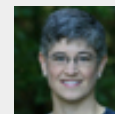
---



Lisa Collier Cool



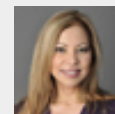
Sam Greengard



Jane Langille



Britta Barrett



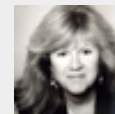
Linda Melone



Dan Ferber



Paula Dranov



Sue Russell

## BLOGROLL

---

- [New York Times Well](#)
- [John Barban](#)
- [The Healthcare IT Guv](#)

mandatorily closed for 18 days, for example – flu transmission was reduced by 29 to 37 percent. Notable enough to suggest that in the event of a pandemic, closing schools and canceling public gatherings could be a useful counter-measure.

## CONNECT THE DOTS

The FDA has information on [Influenza Vaccine Safety and Availability](#). Read more about influenza at the [Centers for Disease Control](#) and [Flu.gov](#). Check out global flu trends at: [Visualizing Search Data: Flu Around the World](#).



---

ADD NEW COMMENT

Login



Type your comment here.

---

◀ PREVIOUS POST

NEXT POST ▶

- [The Health Care Blog](#)
- [KevinMD](#)
- [Cooking Light Eating Smart](#)
- [Think Simple Now](#)
- [Good Magazine](#)
- [Diets In Review](#)
- [The Next Level](#)

---

## CONTACT US

Share your ideas at:  
[contact.healthymagination@ge.com](mailto:contact.healthymagination@ge.com).

About Healthymagination

Projects

Stories

From the Better Health Blog

[What is Healthymagination?](#)

[All Faces](#)

[GOOD Guide to Living Better](#)

[Tasty Farmer's Market Recipes](#)

[Leadership](#)  
[Advisory Board](#)  
[Press](#)  
[GE Healthcare](#)  
[GE Reports](#)  
[2009 Annual Report](#)  
[2010 Annual Report](#)

[Game Changers Summit](#)  
[Better Health Evaluator](#)  
[Health of Nations](#)  
[Healthy How-To's](#)  
[Visualizing Data](#)  
[Healthy Innovation](#)  
[Better Health Study](#)  
[Sharing Healthy Ideas](#)

[Healthy School Days](#)  
[Meet mobilegs](#)  
[Morsel Summer Survival Guide](#)  
[The Art of Therapy](#)  
[Healthy Alterations](#)  
[Decoding Data](#)  
[Pediatric Adventures](#)  
[Hip-Hop Health](#)

[The Anti-Diet: Winning the War on Obesity](#)  
[Tiny Tots in the Dentist's Chair Among Changes in Pediatric Dentistry – MedicineNet](#)

## Applications

[HealthyShare](#)  
[Fit Friendly](#)  
[Stats of the Union](#)  
[Morsel](#)  
[I'm Expecting](#)  
[Sleep on It](#)  
[Moody Me](#)  
[Patient Shuffle](#)  
[My Diet Diary](#)

## Social Presence

[Blog](#)  
[Facebook](#)  
[Twitter](#)  
[YouTube](#)



[Contact Information](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Terms](#) | [Sitemap](#) | © 2012 General Electric Company