



# The Influenza Vaccine: Part I

## What Science Says

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Influenza A and B are viruses that cause respiratory illnesses and can cause complicated conditions such as pneumonia, and exacerbate underlying diseases such as coronary artery disease and chronic obstructive lung disease, among many others. Near universal recommendations exist for yearly flu vaccines after the age of 6 months, but what does the evidence say?

For clarity, I am primarily utilizing the Cochrane Library, which you can access these abstracts as well. This database is the primary source internationally for the best of 'Evidence Based Medicine'. This group mainly does extensive data base reviews of current evidence for clinical practice. Medically speaking, evidence for vaccine use primarily comes from its ability not only to prevent that illness, but much more importantly prevent resulting complicated illnesses. Several reviews will be included ranging from use in children to the elderly. Today we discuss our children.

As usual I will reference articles by their Pub Med ID number so you can go to Pub Med for a direct look at the review abstracts if you choose. So let's proceed with "Vaccines for Preventing Influenza in Healthy Children" PMID: 22895945. In a review of 75 studies involving 300,000 observations, the following conclusions are made:

- From the age of 6 months to 2 years this vaccine is **no better than placebo** at preventing influenza. To emphasize this point, in a world of inherently biased literature where 'negative' results are usually suppressed, we find that evidence based medicine tells us not to vaccinate these children. Although very little evidence of harm was found, it did not help, in any way. A recent review that incorporated studies excluded by Cochrane for methodological flaws did find some efficacy in preventing flu, but not in preventing complications. This is just the beginning.
- Between the age of 2 years and 6 years the vaccine appears far more effective, where the NNV (number needed to vaccinate) is only 6. This is a very low number - meaning a high efficacy. As a parent, no one wants their child to get any illness,

however the vaccine was not associated with preventing any complications from flu. The study also comments that complication rates were difficult to assess due to “Extensive evidence of reporting bias of safety outcomes from trials of live attenuated influenza vaccines (LAIVs) impeded meaningful analysis.” What this means is that when people claim that the vaccine is safe in this or any population, they cannot say that with any scientific validity! The further unanswered question is, is it healthier long term in terms of immune competence and education of our immune system to naturally acquire immunity to these viruses? So yes, the vaccine works very well in this age group, but at an unknown complication rate from the vaccine and absolutely no benefit in preventing complications from influenza.

- Between the ages of 6 to 16, the NNV for the flu vaccine rises to 28, still not a bad number in the vaccine world. However, “We could find *no evidence of effect on secondary cases*, lower respiratory tract disease, drug prescriptions, otitis media and its consequences and socioeconomic impact”. Although rare, serious harm has been documented, including febrile seizure, this means serious complications from flu are not being prevented in our children, and yet again at an unknown complication rate.

As we review the trials in healthy adults, even the history of vaccination itself, the ‘selling’ to the public that universal vaccination protects the ‘herd’ has been repeatedly shown as fraudulent, meaning lacking scientific validity. As a parent there is no true, scientifically verifiable evidence that you are truly helping your child by vaccinating them, and at what cost?

In conclusion, the influenza vaccination does help prevent uncomplicated flu between the ages of 2 and 16. Due to “extensive evidence of reporting bias” we can’t claim to know its safety. We also know there remains *No Evidence* of the primary goal of a vaccine, to prevent complicated illness, or to provide herd immunity. Yes, I know that the flu is bad enough, but the idea that the vaccine prevents complications *in healthy children* has proven quite fallacious. And we truly don’t know the short or long term complication rate. Is catching a variety of illnesses important for immune system? I am still left with the question, would I give an influenza vaccine to my healthy child? No! I do want you to have the freedom to choose yes, though!

Our next article will focus on the composition of the flu vaccine and its role in healthy adults.

Your Journey to Health and Healing,  
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