

# FDA approves 2006 strain of flu vaccine

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The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved the manufacture of this year's seasonal influenza vaccine.

The vaccine is designed to fight new virus strains scientists believe are likely to cause flu in the Northern Hemisphere during 2006-07.

Each year influenza vaccine manufacturers submit information and samples to the FDA of the virus strains to be produced for the upcoming seasonal influenza season. This season's FDA-approved formulation is identical to that recommended by the World Health Organization. The formulation includes one strain that was used in last year's vaccine and two new strains.

Seasonal flu vaccines do not protect against avian influenza, which is caused by different viral strains.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say up to 20 percent of the U.S. population is stricken by influenza annually, with about 200,000 people requiring hospitalization and approximately 36,000 people dying from the disease.

At high risk for serious flu complications are elderly people, children and people with certain chronic medical conditions.

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