

CDC: Almost everyone needs a flu shot

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(HealthDay)—Less than half of all Americans got a flu shot last year, so U.S. health officials on Thursday urged that everyone 6 months and older get vaccinated for the coming flu season. "It's really unfortunate that half of Americans are not getting the protection from flu they could get," said Thomas Frieden, M.D., director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, during a morning news conference.

Just one-third of adults 18 to 64—the age group hit especially hard last [flu season](#)—were vaccinated against flu last year, according to new CDC figures. Also, more than 100 children died from flu-related complications last year, Frieden noted. "Many of those deaths might have been prevented if children had gotten a flu vaccination," he said. Ninety percent of the children who died were unvaccinated, he added.

According to the CDC's Sept. 19 issue of *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, while just 46 percent of Americans overall were

vaccinated against flu last year, children fared better than adults—with 59 percent of children immunized compared to 42 percent of adults. Coverage was highest among children younger than 5 years and adults 65 and older. This year, the CDC recommends the flu nasal spray vaccine for children 2 to 8 years old. But if the nasal spray isn't available immediately, these kids should get the shot, Frieden said.

There is some encouraging news in the new report. Slightly more than half of pregnant women got flu shots in recent years. Among health care workers, vaccination rates are rising. Overall, 75 percent of [health care workers](#) were vaccinated last flu season, with rates the highest among doctors and nurses, at 90 percent. Frieden said about 150 million doses of [flu vaccine](#) should be available for the U.S. market this year. This is up somewhat from last [flu](#) season.

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