

Flu winds down as FDA aims for better vaccine next winter

March 4 2015, byLauran Neergaard

The miserable flu season is winding down, but it's lasted longer than usual and federal health officials warn there's still a lot of illness spreading.

An aggressive flu strain caused most of this year's illnesses, and the vaccine wasn't a good match. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, flu-related hospitalizations of seniors were at their highest since 2005. It's too soon to know the [death toll](#), but CDC has counted 92 flu-related deaths among children, close to the yearly average.

Flu viruses constantly mutate, and a slightly different so-called H3N2 strain started spreading only after the vaccine was being brewed—too late to add it to the shots. Wednesday, government advisers recommended adding that strain to next winter's vaccine, in hopes of better protection.

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