High-dose flu shot no better for heart patients
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The study was conducted over three flu seasons. It included more than 5,200 patients at 157 medical centers in the United States and Canada. All patients had recently been hospitalized for a heart problem, including heart attack within the previous year or heart failure within the previous two years.

All of the patients had at least one additional risk factor for heart disease, such as being 65 or older, smoking, type 2 diabetes, obesity or kidney disease. Peripheral artery disease or a history of stroke were other known risk factors.

The patients received either regular or high-dose flu shots. At the end of the study, the two groups did not have statistically significant differences in hospitalizations and deaths: 883 heart/lung-related hospitalizations and 92 deaths in the high-dose group; and 846 such hospitalizations and 78 deaths in the regular-dose group.

Many high-risk cardiovascular patients don't get vaccinated at all, said study co-leader Dr. Scott Solomon, a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. "For reducing hospitalizations due to heart and lung complications, just getting vaccinated with any influenza vaccine may substantially lower risk in our high-risk patients," he said.

The study was published online Dec. 4 in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

More information: The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on heart disease patients and the flu.

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