

WHY YOU CAN GET THE FLU SHOT AND STILL GET THE FLU

Each flu season, thousands of nasal swabs from persons experiencing flu-like symptoms are collected from 10 regions throughout the U.S. and sent to the CDC for analysis. Over the last 11 years, only 14% of samples were positive for influenza. In other words, you can get a flu shot and still get “the flu” because 86% of flu-like illness is not prevented by vaccination.

In 2009, the Swine Flu outbreak threatened to be a pandemic. At the peak of the outbreak, 42.1% of swabs were positive for influenza viruses; within two weeks, the amount of virus in circulation returned to normal seasonal levels.

YEAR	Total Specimens Tested	Total Influenza Viruses Isolated	% swabs that were influenza	11 year average
1997-98	99,072	12,929	13.05	↓
1998-99	102,105	14,512	14.21	
1999-00	106,768	14,681	13.75	
2000-01	99,497	10,506	10.56	
2001-02	109,139	16,402	15.03	
2002-03	96,871	9,841	10.16	
2003-04	130,577	24,649	18.90	
2004-05	157,759	23,549	14.92	
2005-06	179,772	11,145	11.91	
2006-07	179,268	23,753	13.20	
2007-08	225,329	39,827	18.00	
	1,081,560	127,069	153.69	13.97%
2009-2010	181,130	35,939	19.80%	
Peak of Swine flu outbreak Oct. 24, 2009 (wk 42)	19,642	8,268	42.1%	
3 wks later (wk 45)	10,803	3,016	28.80%	
5 wks later (wk 47)	6,224	956	15.40%	

Source:

CDC: Weekly Flu Activity & Surveillance Reports
 October (wk 40) to May (wk 20) each year.
<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivity.htm>

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