

## Uncommon year for flu vaccine as effectiveness lower than expected

This year's flu vaccine is doing a pretty crummy job. It's only 23 percent effective, which is one of the worst performances in the last decade, according to a government study released Thursday.

"This is an uncommon year," said Dr. Alicia Fry, a flu vaccine expert at the Atlanta-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, who was involved in the study.

The findings are not surprising, though. In early December, CDC officials warned the vaccine probably wouldn't work very well because it isn't well matched to a strain that's been spreading widely.

Each year, the flu vaccine is reformulated, based on experts' best guess at which three or four strains will be the biggest problem. Those decisions are usually made in February, months before the flu season, to give companies that make flu shots and nasal spray vaccine enough time to make enough doses.

But this year's formula didn't include the strain of H3N2 virus that ended up causing about two-thirds of the illnesses this winter.

**Read full, original story:** Flu vaccine not working well; only 23 percent effective