



FLU SHOT FACTS



An evidence-based resource to help you make an informed decision regarding flu vaccinations.



- Influenza (flu) is the most burdensome infectious disease in the United States.
- The flu has the potential to cause very serious disease. Every year, millions of individuals become sick with the flu, leading to hundreds of thousands of people being hospitalized, and many thousand deaths.
- Every flu season is different, that's why it is recommended to receive a flu vaccine every year.

Recommendation:

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) recommend that all individuals over 6 months of age receive a flu vaccine annually.

Below is information on common myths and misconceptions regarding the flu vaccine.



MYTH: The flu vaccine can give you the flu.



THE TRUTH: Flu vaccines **cannot** cause flu illness. Flu shots are made with either:

- Flu viruses that are inactivated (killed) and therefore are not infectious
- Attenuated (weakened) flu viruses that will not cause illness
- A single gene from a flu virus which does not cause infection



MYTH: I don't need a flu vaccine every year.



THE TRUTH: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend a yearly flu vaccine for everyone over 6 months of age. A person's immunity from vaccination declines over time, therefore, receiving a vaccine annually is needed to provide optimal protection against flu viruses. Flu viruses are also constantly changing, so the flu vaccine is annually reviewed and updated as needed based on which flu viruses are causing illness.



MYTH: It's better to get sick with the flu than to get a flu vaccine.



THE TRUTH: It is **not** better to get the flu. The flu can be a very serious disease, especially for young children, older adults, and individuals with chronic health conditions. Flu infections carry a risk of serious complications, hospitalizations, and even death. Receiving a flu vaccine is a safer choice than risking illness.



Flu Insight: Why do some people not feel well after getting a flu vaccine?

As with any vaccination, some people report having mild side effects after a flu vaccine. The most common side effects are redness, soreness, and, tenderness or swelling where the shot was given. Headaches, muscle aches, or low-grade fever may also occur. If people experience these side effects, they often begin shortly after receiving the vaccine and last 1-2 days. Serious allergic reactions to the flu vaccine are very rare and if they do occur, it is usually within a few minutes or hours after receiving the vaccine.

Sources:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/misconceptions.htm>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/viruses/index.htm>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/season/index.html>

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