

Flu vaccination: myths & facts

MYTH: Healthy people do not need a flu vaccine.

FACT: Healthy people can get flu and suffer life-threatening complications from it. They may also spread flu to people at high risk, including:

- Children younger than 5 (especially those younger than 2)
- Adults 65 years old or older
- Pregnant women
- Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
- People with many chronic health conditions and disorders

MYTH: The flu isn't serious.

FACT: Complications of flu include bacterial pneumonia, ear or sinus infections, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions such as congestive heart failure, asthma or diabetes.

MYTH: I should wait to get my flu vaccine.

FACT: CDC recommends everyone older than 6 months get an annual flu vaccine by the end of October if possible, as that's usually the beginning of flu season. Immunity lasts through a full flu season for almost everyone. As long as flu viruses are circulating, it is not too late to get vaccinated, even in January or later.

MYTH: Flu shots can give people the flu.

FACT: The flu vaccine is made with inactivated viruses

or no virus at all, so you can't get the flu from it. You may experience side effects including soreness or redness where the shot was given. Rarer are low-grade fever, headaches or muscle aches. Side effects usually go away in one or two days. Fans are running

MYTH: Flu shots aren't safe or effective.

FACT: Hundreds of millions of Americans have safely received flu vaccines over the past 50 years, and extensive research supports the safety of flu vaccines. Flu strains change every year, so the annual vaccine protects against most new viruses that are circulating.

MYTH: It's OK to go to work or school if you have flu-like symptoms.

FACT: To keep flu from spreading, it's important to stay home if you don't feel well or may be contagious. Stay home at least 24 hours after a fever is gone. People are contagious one day before symptoms appear and up to a week after.

Protect yourself and the people around you by getting a flu vaccination this year.

