

ARM YOURSELF with information



Facts about the flu and flu vaccine

Healthy adults can spread the flu virus *the day before* they feel sick.¹ Help reduce the risk of flu for yourself, your family and those around you.

The impact of influenza

- Commonly known as the flu, influenza is a contagious disease of the respiratory tract (nose, throat and lungs) that can lead to serious complications, such as pneumonia and dehydration. It can worsen chronic conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma or diabetes.²
- Most people who get influenza will recover in a few days to less than two weeks.³ Symptoms may include fever, headaches, extreme tiredness, cough, sore throat, nasal congestion and body aches.²
- Annually, more than 200,000 people on average in the U.S. are hospitalized from complications due to influenza.²
- About 36,000 U.S. residents die from influenza each year.²

The value of vaccination

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that: “The single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu vaccination each fall.”¹
- Influenza vaccine is convenient and inexpensive, compared to the cost of getting the disease.
- Influenza vaccine is highly effective too. When the match between the flu vaccine and the circulating flu strains is close, a vaccination prevents influenza illness in about 70% to 90% of healthy people under age 65.⁴



The influenza vaccine may not prevent everyone from getting the flu. Talk to your doctor about whether you have a condition that prevents you from getting a flu shot.

GO YOU[®]





Clearing up the confusion

Here are just a few of the most common myths and facts about the influenza vaccine:

MYTH: I might catch the flu from the vaccine.

FACT: Injectable influenza vaccines are made from influenza viruses that have been killed – a killed virus cannot give you the flu.⁴

MYTH: I've heard the side effects from the shot are worse than the virus itself.

FACT: Most people who receive the influenza vaccine don't develop serious problems; however, all vaccines have side effects. The most common side effects of influenza vaccines include local reactions and mild general symptoms. A vaccine, like any medicine, may cause problems such as severe allergic reactions.⁴ Tell your doctor if you have severe allergies, have had a severe reaction after a dose of the influenza vaccine, or if you've ever had Guillain-Barre syndrome.⁵

MYTH: The flu shot is only for old people and children.

FACT: Anyone can get the flu (even healthy people), and serious problems from influenza can happen at any age, but some people are at higher risk of developing serious flu-related complications. This includes people 65 years and older, those with certain chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease), pregnant women, and young children.³

MYTH: The flu shot works only if you get vaccinated in the fall.

FACT: Although October and November are the recommended months for vaccination (because that's when the viruses begin to circulate), a vaccination given later in the season (December to March) can still help protect you from the flu.¹

1. Key Facts about Influenza and Influenza Vaccine. Available at: www.cdc.gov/flu/keyfacts.htm. Page last updated: October 4, 2011.
2. Questions and Answers: The Disease. Available at: www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/disease.htm. Page last updated: July 6, 2011.
3. Flu Symptoms & Severity. Retrieved from: www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/symptoms.htm. Accessed March 2012. The page last updated: June 29, 2011.
4. Questions and Answers: Flu Shot. Available at: www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/flushot.htm. Page last updated: September 21, 2011.
5. Vaccine Information Statement: Seasonal Shot. Retrieved from: www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/protect/vis-flu.pdf. Accessed March 2012. The page last updated: July 26, 2011.



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