

Facts on **FLU SHOTS**

How much do you really know about the flu?
Don't fall for the myths.

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"The shot can give you the flu."

FALSE Flu vaccines are made from *killed* influenza viruses. These cannot give you the flu.

"Even if I get a flu shot, I can still get the flu."

MAYBE This can happen, but the flu shot usually protects most people. Other viruses also circulate during the flu season and can cause illnesses that feel like the flu. The flu shot will not protect you against those other viruses.

"The vaccine isn't 100% effective, so I'm better off getting the flu."

FALSE No vaccine is 100% effective. However, if you get a flu shot but still get the flu, you are likely to be far less sick than you would have been without the protection.

"The side effects are worse than the flu."

FALSE The worst side effect you're likely to get is a sore arm. The risk of injury or death from a rare allergic reaction is **far** less than the risk of severe complications from influenza.

"Not everyone can take the flu shot."

TRUE People who are allergic to eggs (used in making the vaccine); currently have a severe, acute illness; or have had a severe reaction to the flu vaccine in the past, might not be able to get this protection.

"Only the very old and sick need the flu shot."

FALSE Even if you're in good health, if you are 65 years old or older, have a chronic (on-going) or long-term health condition, or are in the 2nd or 3rd trimester of pregnancy, you have a greater risk of complications if you get the flu. Even if you aren't at high risk of complications, you can get a flu shot to prevent the flu and to protect everyone you live with and contact.

"I don't have to get the flu shot by December."

TRUE The flu shot can be given before or during the flu season. You should let those who need the protection most have the first shots—those 65 years old or older, with chronic (on-going) or long-term health conditions, and health care workers. It's best not to delay, but if you do, don't give up!

THE FLU is more than the sniffles. It's coughing. It's fever. It's aching. And it can lead to pneumonia. In fact, complications from the flu kill more than 20,000 Americans each year and cause more than 100,000 to be hospitalized. The best protection you can get—and give—is a flu shot.

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For more information, ask your health care provider or call the CDC Immunization Hot Line.

ENGLISH: **1-800-232-2522**

ESPAÑOL: **1-800-232-0233**

www.cdc.gov/nip/flu



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the
Flu**

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