

## Top 5 Flu Shot Myths



The flu is a serious illness that makes you feel miserable and may lead to hospitalization and death. The most

common symptoms are fever, cough, chills, aches, and extreme weakness. The flu is highly contagious and can spread via coughing, sneezing, or close contact with someone who is sick. Getting the flu shot is one of the most effective ways to prevent the flu and it is important to understand clarify misconceptions about the vaccine.

1. MYTH: *The flu shot can give me the flu.*

FACT: The flu shot contains a dead flu virus and cannot make you sick. It takes one to two weeks to be fully protected from the flu after receiving the vaccine. A person may have coincidentally caught the flu within this time period or they may have already been infected prior to receiving the shot. Another possibility of catching the flu even though you have been vaccinated could be because you caught a strain of the flu that wasn't covered in the current flu season's shot.

2. MYTH: *I am healthy and have never caught the flu so I don't need the flu shot.*

FACT: The flu is a contagious virus and can infect anyone, even young, healthy people. The vaccine protects everyone from the flu and is recommended for anyone 6 months of age and older. High risk populations are children, adults over the age of 65, pregnant women, and immunocompromised individuals (i.e. HIV infected). Not only is it important for these groups to receive the vaccine, but also those who are in contact with them. In addition, your body may be protected from some strains of the flu and not others. New strains that your body is not protected against may develop each year so it is important to get the updated flu season vaccine.

3. Myth: *I already got the flu shot last year so I won't need it this year.*

FACT: The flu virus changes each year so the strains that were covered in the previous flu season's vaccine may not be covered in this season's vaccine. It is important to get the updated vaccination each year so that your body can become immune to the strains that you are likely to be exposed to this year.

4. Myth: *The flu shot has too many side effects.*

FACT: The flu shot is limited to very few side effects such as soreness and tenderness at the injection site. Some people that get the flu shot for the first time *may* experience headaches or muscle aches.

5. Myth: *I am pregnant so I cannot get the flu shot.*

The inactivated vaccine is safe at any stage of pregnancy. In fact, during the second half of pregnancy there is more risk of hospitalization when getting the flu. Also, women at any pregnancy stage with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of flu complications and should get the inactivated flu shot.