

Attention! Attention! All Healthcare Workers! **THIS IS NOT A TEST**

This is an Important Notice about Common Misperceptions of Influenza

MYTH #1

You are not at risk for getting influenza because you're healthy, and as someone who works in a healthcare environment, you've been exposed to so many germs that you're immune to everything.

FACT

Healthcare workers can have an increased risk of exposure to influenza due to the nature of the job.

MYTH #2

You don't have any influenza symptoms so you can't transmit the influenza virus to your patients.

FACT

Even if you don't show symptoms of having influenza yet, the virus can still be transmitted to patients. Healthcare workers infected with influenza can transmit the highly contagious virus to patients in their care, which is particularly troubling for the many patients at high-risk for influenza-related complications that can lead to serious illness, and even death. Preventing the incidence of the influenza virus protects patients and may save lives.

MYTH #3

You work in a large facility and there are many staff members who don't get vaccinated against influenza. So, one influenza vaccination won't make a difference.

FACT

You can demonstrate your leadership by getting vaccinated against influenza and show that quality of patient care is important to you. Vaccination of healthcare workers can prevent the incidence of influenza in healthcare settings. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) clearly states that influenza vaccination is the most effective method for preventing influenza virus infection and its potentially severe complications. Healthcare worker vaccination is important for influenza prevention and control.

MYTH #4

Getting the influenza vaccine can actually give you influenza.

FACT

Trivalent inactivated influenza vaccine (TIV) contains killed viruses and thus cannot cause influenza. However, live, attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) contains live, attenuated viruses and therefore does have the potential to produce mild signs or symptoms related to attenuated influenza virus infection.

MYTH #5

The influenza vaccine doesn't work.

FACT

The influenza vaccine can be expected to reduce influenza illness by approximately 70% to 90% in healthy adults less than 65 years of age, when the vaccine and circulating virus are well matched. The ability of the influenza vaccine to protect a person depends on the age and health status of the person getting the vaccine, and the similarity or "match" between the virus strains in the vaccine and those in circulation.

MYTH #6

Antibiotics can work just as well as the influenza vaccine.

FACT

The single best way to protect yourself against influenza is by getting vaccinated. Influenza is a viral infection and cannot be treated by antibiotics. Taking antibiotics when they aren't needed contributes to the serious problem of antibiotic resistance. Antibiotics are not a substitute for the influenza vaccine.

MYTH #7

By January, it's too late to get the influenza vaccine.

FACT

The CDC recommends that influenza vaccination begin as soon as healthcare providers have the vaccine in stock, and should continue throughout the influenza season, even into January. In most years the influenza season does not peak until January or February, therefore vaccination beyond December is medically beneficial and necessary in order to protect as many people as possible.

