

# FLU MYTHS & FACTS

**Myth:** Vaccines can be dangerous and may have adverse health effects

**FACT:** Almost all individuals who get an influenza vaccine do not experience serious problems. Some may experience a sore arm at the site where the vaccine is injected. The risk of a flu vaccine causing serious harm or death is extremely small. Those who receive a flu vaccine may experience fever, muscle pain, and feelings of discomfort or weakness. These side effects typically last 1-2 days after vaccination and are much less severe than actual flu illness.

**Myth:** The flu vaccine can cause the flu

**FACT:** The flu vaccine is made with flu viruses that are either weakened or have been inactivated (killed), and only broken up parts of the inactive virus are included in the vaccine. Therefore, the flu vaccine cannot cause the flu. However, it typically takes 2 weeks for the flu vaccine to become effective. During those 2 weeks, it is still possible for an individual to get the flu or another respiratory virus.

**Myth:** Flu vaccination is not necessary each year

**FACT:** Immune protection from the flu vaccine declines over time, so annual vaccination is critical to provide the best protection. And since the vaccine may change each year to match circulating flu viruses, it is important to get vaccinated each year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends annual vaccination for all individuals age 6 months and older.

**Myth:** Healthy people don't need a flu vaccine

**FACT:** Anyone can get the flu; even young, healthy people are at risk. Getting vaccinated every year is important, regardless of how healthy a person is. And vaccination can help prevent the spread of the virus to others who may be vulnerable to flu and related complications.

**Myth:** The flu is nothing more than just a bad cold

**FACT:** Flu is distinct from a bad cold—it is more serious, and can cause high fever, head and body aches, coughing for days, and severe fatigue for up to 2 weeks or more. Flu can also lead to more serious complications and even death. In the US, millions of people get sick, hundreds of thousands are hospitalized, and thousands or tens of thousands of people die from flu every year.

**Myth:** There is nothing you can do if you get the flu

**FACT:** Know the symptoms. If you, a child, or a loved one gets sick, contact your healthcare provider immediately to discuss treatment options. Prescription antiviral drugs can make the illness milder, make you feel better faster, and may also prevent serious flu-related complications.

References:

[www.preventchildhoodinfluenza.org/resources/general-resources/myths-and-facts-about-influenza.html](http://www.preventchildhoodinfluenza.org/resources/general-resources/myths-and-facts-about-influenza.html)  
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