

# Flu Vaccine

## myths and facts



Department of Health  
and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention

### “People can die from the flu.”

TRUE

Influenza (flu) is a serious disease of the nose, throat, and lungs, and it can lead to pneumonia. Each year about 114,000 people in the U.S. are hospitalized and about 36,000 people die because of the flu. Most who die are 65 years and older. But small children less than 2 years old are as likely as those over 65 to have to go to the hospital because of the flu.

### “The flu shot cannot cause the flu.”

TRUE

The flu shot cannot cause the flu. Some people get a little soreness or swelling where they get the shot. It goes away in a day or two. Serious problems from the flu shot are very rare.

### “Even if I get flu vaccine, I can still get the flu.”

TRUE

The vaccine usually protects most people from the flu. Sometimes a person who gets a flu vaccine can get the flu, but it will often be milder than without the vaccine. Flu vaccine will not protect you from other viruses that sometimes feel like the flu.

### “The side effects are worse than the flu.”

FALSE

The worst side effect you’re likely to get from a flu shot is a sore arm. The nasal mist flu vaccine might cause nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat and cough. The risk of a rare allergic reaction is far less than the risk of severe complications from the flu.

### “Only older people need a flu vaccine.”

FALSE

Adults and children with conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and kidney disease need to get a flu shot. Doctors recommend children 6 to 23 months of age get the vaccination.

### “You must get a flu vaccine before December.”

FALSE

Flu vaccine can be given before or during the flu season. The best time to get vaccinated is October or November. But you can get vaccinated in December or later.



*Get Your Flu Vaccine!*

For more information, ask your healthcare provider or call the CDC Immunization Hotline  
English **800-232-2522** Español **800-232-0233** Website **www.cdc.gov/flu**