

September

Weekly Wellness Tips

Week 3

Seasonal Flu Vaccine Myths

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends anyone over the age of 6 months get a flu shot each year. Unfortunately, many people don't get one because they believe one or more of the following myths.

Myth: The flu isn't so bad.

Fact: The flu vaccine cannot give you the flu, although you may get side effects like a sore arm, low fever or achiness. Side effects are generally mild and short-lived.

Myth: Healthy people don't need a vaccine.

Fact: Anyone can become sick with the flu and experience complications, even people who are active and healthy. Plus, if you get the flu, you may endanger those around you who are at a higher risk for complications.

Myth: You can still get the flu after getting the vaccine.

Fact: This one is partially true for the following reasons:

- You may have been exposed to a non-flu virus, such as the common cold.
- You may have been exposed to the flu after you got vaccinated but before the vaccine took effect, which takes about two weeks after vaccination.
- You may have been exposed to a flu virus that was different from the viruses included in the current year's vaccine. The standard flu vaccine protects against the three influenza viruses expected to be most prevalent, but other flu viruses circulate as well.

Myth: It's too late to get protection from a flu vaccine.

Fact: As long as the flu season isn't over, it's not too late to get vaccinated. Flu seasons can begin early in fall and last until spring, so getting a vaccine can still be beneficial into the spring months.

Myth: You only need to get vaccinated if family and friends get sick from the flu.

Fact: If you wait until people around you get sick, it is often too late to protect yourself, because it takes about two weeks for the vaccine to kick in.



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Myth: The discomfort of getting a shot isn't worth it.

Fact: The very minor pain of a flu shot is nothing compared to the flu. Plus, many people can get the nasal-spray vaccine instead of getting a shot. Talk to your doctor about which is the best choice for you.

Myth: If you got the vaccine last year, you don't need it this year.

Fact: Research suggests that your body's immunity from the flu vaccine declines throughout the year, so there is often not enough immunity left to protect you from getting sick for multiple seasons. This is why the CDC suggests getting a flu vaccine annually.

Myth: The vaccine isn't safe.

Fact: Flu vaccines have been used for more than 50 years and have a very good safety track record. They are made the same way each year, and their safety is closely monitored by the CDC and Food and Drug Administration.

Is it worth getting the flu shot? Probably! Over the past 10 years, flu shot efficacy has ranged from as low as 19% to as high as 60%. Even when the effectiveness is low, being vaccinated is important. People who get the flu shot are more likely to have a milder infection, less likely to have flu-related complications, less likely to be hospitalized, and less likely to be admitted to the intensive care unit.

Additionally, getting the flu vaccine helps you prevent spreading the flu within your community to those who are medically vulnerable and unable to receive the vaccine. Remember the golden rule – do unto others as you would have done unto you!

Talk to your doctor with any questions or concerns.

Source: www.cdc.gov

