

Flu myths vs. facts

Many people have reasons why they don't get their flu shot. But these myth busters will prove that getting vaccinated is your best shot for not getting the flu.



Myth: Getting sick with the flu will build up a natural defense. That's better than what I'd get from the flu shot.

Fact: Getting the flu shot is a safer way to build up defense than getting sick. That's because the flu can lead to:

- Serious sickness
- Time in the hospital
- Death

People with a higher chance of getting very sick include:

- Young children
- Older adults
- Pregnant women
- People with certain health problems

Flu shots aren't perfect, but they still help a lot. How well the flu shot works can change each year. It depends on things like your age, your health and the kind of flu that's going around.

But experts agree that getting a flu shot every year is still the best way to stay safe during flu season. It's a simple step that can make a big difference.

Getting a shot is a safer choice than getting sick. Make an appointment to get your flu shot. This will help cover new variants and keep you and your loved ones healthy. It can also lower your chance of getting very sick if you do get the flu.



Myth: I might catch the flu from the flu shot.

Fact: The flu shot cannot give you the flu. It has an inactive virus or virus particles that won't give you the flu.

You might feel a little under the weather after getting vaccinated. But don't worry, these side effects are usually mild and go away on their own within a day or two. You might experience some muscle aches, headaches or a low-grade fever. These are normal and will pass soon. What's actually happening is an immune response. This means the immune system, or the way the body protects itself, is working.



Myth: I think it's too late in the season for me to get a flu shot this year.

Fact: Flu season is usually from November through the end of April. It takes 2 weeks to get full protection from the vaccine. So the best time to get your flu shot is between September and the end of October, before flu season starts. But if it's later in the flu season and you haven't gotten the flu shot yet, it's not too late to get it and protect you and your loved ones.



Myth: I'm fairly healthy, and I got the flu shot last year. I don't need the flu shot again this year, right?

Fact: You should not skip your annual flu shot or the COVID-19 vaccine. It's an important way for you to stay healthy.

Flu and COVID-19 shots are updated every year to fight off new variants. So they may be different from last year. Also, any protection you had from a previous shot goes down over time. It may not be enough to protect you this season.



Myth: I've heard that people age 65 years and older should get a different flu shot.

Fact: All flu vaccines provide protection against the flu. The CDC prefers certain vaccines for people age 65 and older. But don't wait for a specific one. The most important thing is to get vaccinated. Talk to your doctor about what's right for you.

Schedule an appointment
with your PCP's office or
book directly through
MyChart.



- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Misconceptions about seasonal flu and flu vaccines. [cdc.gov/flu/prevention/misconceptions.html](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevention/misconceptions.html). Sept. 6, 2024.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. About influenza. [cdc.gov/flu/about/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/index.html).
- Grohskopf LA, Ferdinands JM, Blanton LH, Broder KR, Loehr J. Prevention and control of seasonal influenza with vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices — United States, 2024–25 influenza season. MMWR Recomm Rep 2024;73(No. RR-5):1–25.

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