

Shoo the flu.



Top Ten Myths about the Flu/Flu Vaccine

- 1. You can catch the flu from the flu vaccine.** Fact: This is probably the biggest myth surrounding the flu shot. The truth is you cannot get the flu from the vaccine. The injectable vaccine is made of inactivated viruses, so it is impossible to get the flu from the vaccine. The most common side effect is mild soreness or redness at the injection site, headache, low-grade fever, or a runny nose for a day after receiving the vaccine.
- 2. You must get the flu vaccine during the fall for it to be effective.** Fact: The U.S. flu season usually peaks between late December and early March, according to the CDC. However getting the flu shot later in the season can still provide benefits. It only takes about two weeks after vaccination for your body to produce the antibodies to ward off the flu, and offering you protection from a late-season peak.
- 3. You can only catch the flu in cold weather regions.** Fact: The flu virus exists in almost every climate and temperature. According to the CDC, the flu peaks first in the western sections of the US, an area known for its more warm temperatures, and moves eastward to the colder climates.
- 4. Getting an influenza shot every year weakens your immune system.** Fact: The vaccine prepares and boosts your immune system to help you fight the virus if you contract it. People who get the influenza shot each year are better protected against influenza than those who do not get vaccinated.
- 5. The flu can be avoided through simple, general health practices.** Fact: Frequent hand washing, eating right, and getting plenty of rest do help to protect your immune system, but nothing provides better coverage from the flu virus like a flu shot.
- 6. The flu is spread through direct contact from an infected person to another.** Fact: The flu is mostly spread from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people with influenza. Touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching his/her mouth or nose may also infect a person. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 days after becoming sick. That means the flu can be transmitted to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.
- 7. People shouldn't be immunized against influenza if they are sick.** Fact: Minor illnesses with or without fever should not prevent vaccination, especially in children with mild colds or respiratory allergies. In addition, people with chronic illnesses are at a higher risk for contracting the influenza virus and related complications. These individuals should be immunized annually and early in the flu season.
- 8. The side effects of the flu shot are worse than the flu.** Fact: Most people experience little or no side effects, and the influenza vaccine usually produces no increase in systemic side effects or disability in the elderly. Symptoms attributed by patients to a recent influenza vaccine are likely secondary to coincidental illness coupled with heightened somatic awareness following vaccination. If an individual does experience flu-like side effects, the duration is short (usually no longer than 24-48 hours) whereas influenza can hang on for 10 days or more and may leave a person debilitated for a longer time. Moreover, a true case of influenza always leaves open the possibility of chronic complications (such as pneumonia) and even death.
- 9. You shouldn't get a flu shot if you are pregnant.** Fact: The physical effects of pregnancy put women at risk for serious complications of flu, and studies have found no harmful effects on the fetus associated with flu vaccine. The CDC says women who are at any stage of pregnancy during flu season should be immunized.
- 10. You won't be able to get a flu shot because there aren't enough vaccines.** Fact: Many offices and clinics, including Concentra Medical Centers, have already begun to receive its supply of vaccine doses and may receive second shipments later in the season. The CDC expects to have the largest number of doses ever, up to 132 million flu vaccine doses during the flu season.