

# Flu Vaccine

## Facts & Myths



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

**“People can die from the flu.”**

**TRUE**

Influenza (flu) is a highly infectious disease of the 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.

**“Even if I get flu vaccine, I can still get a mild case of the flu.”**

**TRUE**

The vaccine usually protects most people from the flu. Sometimes a person who receives flu vaccine can get the flu but will be far less sick 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 with injectable vaccine 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 influenza.

**“Not everyone can take flu vaccine.”**

**TRUE**

You might not be able to get this protection if you are allergic to eggs (used in making the vaccine), are very ill with a high fever, or have had a severe reaction to the flu vaccine in the past.

**“Only older people need flu vaccine.”**

**FALSE**

Adults and children with conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and kidney disease need to get flu vaccine. People who are active and healthy can benefit from the protection the flu vaccine offers.

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

**FALSE**

Flu vaccine can be given before or during the flu season. While the best time to get flu vaccine is October or November, getting immunized in December or later can still protect you against the flu.



For more information, ask your health care provider or call the CDC IMMUNIZATION HOTLINE  
English **800-232-2522** Español **800-232-0233** Website [www.cdc.gov/nip/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/nip/flu)