

Let's Fight the Flu Together:

Schedule your influenza vaccination today!

- Influenza is a contagious respiratory disease with potentially serious complications
- Anyone – even healthy adults – can become infected with influenza
- Annual vaccination is the single best way to help prevent influenza
- Getting vaccinated against influenza helps protect those around you who may be at higher risk for complications
- Although October and November are the recommended months for vaccination (because that's when influenza viruses usually begin to circulate), getting vaccinated later in the season can still help protect you and your loved ones from influenza

Influenza vaccination may not prevent the disease in 100% of individuals. Persons should consult their healthcare providers to determine if they have a condition that precludes them from receiving the vaccine. All vaccines have side effects. The most common side effects of influenza vaccine include local reactions and mild general symptoms.

Myth: “...the flu is not that serious.”

FACT: Influenza can have serious results.

- ❖ Influenza is a contagious disease of the respiratory tract (nose, throat, and lungs) that can lead to serious complications, including pneumonia and the worsening of chronic conditions such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes and is transmitted from person to person, including between children and adults
- ❖ Of 63 children who died of influenza-related causes last season, 58 had not been vaccinated against influenza according to CDC recommendations
- ❖ Influenza symptoms, which can disrupt your work and social plans for up to 2 weeks, may include fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches
- ❖ Students miss approximately 38 million school days due to influenza each year
- ❖ Parents miss over 10 million work days caring for sick youngsters

Myth: “...I never get the flu.”

FACT: Influenza strains change from year to year.

- ❖ Even if you were immune to influenza strains circulating in the past, you may not be immune to new strains that emerge this season
- ❖ The single best way to help protect yourself from new influenza strains is to get vaccinated each year

Myth: “...I'm willing to risk it.”

FACT: It's not all about you.

- ❖ Current guidelines from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention state that vaccination is recommended for all persons who want to reduce the likelihood of becoming ill with influenza or transmitting influenza to others should they become infected. Vaccination is also recommended for the following groups:
 - People aged 50 years or older
 - All children between the ages of 6 months and 18 years
 - People with certain chronic medical conditions
 - All women who will be pregnant during the influenza season
 - Healthcare workers involved in direct patient care
 - Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children younger than 59 months, adults ages ≥ 50 , and people with certain chronic medical conditions
 - Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities

Myth: “...it's for old people and young kids.”

FACT: Almost anyone older than 6 months of age can benefit.

- ❖ Older adults and young children are just 2 of the groups considered to be at increased risk for complications from influenza, but influenza vaccination can benefit almost anyone over the age of 6 months.
- ❖ Up to 20% of the US population develops influenza every year

Myth: “...I may be allergic to the vaccine.”

FACT: Influenza vaccines are safe for most people.

- ❖ However, the influenza vaccine is not appropriate for those who have had a severe allergic reaction to eggs or to a previous influenza vaccination.
- ❖ Vaccination may not be appropriate if you have a history of Guillain-Barre’ syndrome.
- ❖ Ask your health care professional if you have any questions

Myth: “...I might catch the flu from the vaccine.”

FACT: Injectable influenza vaccines can’t give you influenza.

- ❖ Injectable influenza vaccines are made from influenza viruses that have been killed, and a killed virus cannot give you influenza.

Myth: “...My friend had the influenza shot, but still got the flu.”

FACT: There may be other factors involved.

- ❖ While it’s true that getting an influenza vaccination doesn’t guarantee you won’t become infected with influenza, the vaccine prevents influenza in about 70% to 90% of healthy people younger than age 65. The effectiveness of influenza vaccine varies depending on 2 major factors:
 1. Your age and health status, and
 2. the match between the virus strains in the vaccine and the strains in circulation

Myth: “...I’ve heard the side effects from the shot are worse than the flu itself.”

FACT: Very few people have any serious problems from influenza vaccination.

- ❖ All vaccines have potential side effects; however, most people who receive the influenza vaccine do not develop serious problems. The most common side effects of the vaccine include minor soreness or redness at the site of the shot and mild general symptoms.
- ❖ Rarely, a vaccine, like any medicine, may cause serious problems, such as severe allergic reactions

Myth: “...I missed the vaccination season.”

FACT: You can still protect yourself after autumn.

- ❖ Although October and November are the recommended months for vaccination (because that’s when influenza viruses usually begin to circulate), getting vaccinated in December (or later) can still help protect you and your loved ones from influenza.

References:

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6. CDC. Prevention and Control of Influenza: recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). *MMWR* 2007;56(Early Release);1–54
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