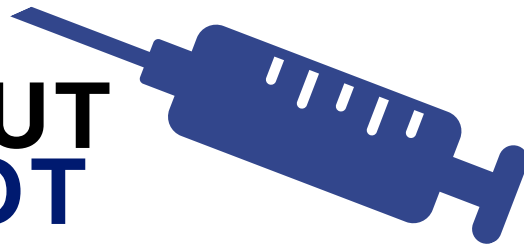


6 COMMON MYTHS ABOUT THE FLU SHOT



Myth #1: The flu shot will give me the flu.

No matter how many times healthcare professionals debunk it, plenty of people still believe that the flu shot contains a weakened version of the influenza virus that will infect them with the flu in order to build up their immunity. And once again, it's just not true.

The flu vaccine doesn't give you the flu because it's a dead virus, not a live one.

Myth #2: I never get the flu, so I don't need the vaccine.

Never having the flu doesn't mean you won't ever get it—and your symptoms could include anything from mild sniffles and sneezes to a low-grade fever, body and muscle aches, headache, sore throat, and cough.

Getting the vaccine also protects those you come in contact with.

Myth #3: The flu is just a bad cold.

The flu actually doesn't fall into the category of minor illnesses. In general, flu is worse than the common cold, and symptoms are more intense. It can also cause serious illness that could require hospitalization.

In some cases, influenza can be a deadly virus and it kills thousands of people every year.

Myth #4: I got the flu shot last year so I don't need another.

The viral strains that circulate each fall and winter change from year to year, and the immunizations distributed to doctor's offices, health clinics, and pharmacies change, too.

You can't coast along on the benefits of last year's shot. You should get a flu shot every year.

Myth #5: The vaccine is harmful or could cause serious side effects.

There are no harmful ingredients in the flu shot.

The most common side effect of the flu shot is a sore arm, while more serious side effects are extremely rare.

Myth #6: The flu shot isn't 100% effective, so why bother?

On average, the flu shot lowers the risk of flu illness by 40% to 60%, according to the CDC.

It's important to remember, though, that no medical intervention is 100% effective. Some protection is always better than no protection.