

Get to Know the Flu Vaccine: You'll Be Glad You Did!

What is flu?

Influenza, or the flu, is a highly contagious viral infection that spreads via droplets made when someone coughs, talks or sneezes.^{1,2} The flu vaccine is the best preventative measure available to help protect against the flu – a serious and potentially deadly disease.³

The Top 10 Flu Vaccine Facts YOU Need to Know

- 1 Who needs a flu vaccine?**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends annual flu vaccination for everyone 6 months of age and older, with rare exception.⁴
- 2 Why do you need a flu vaccination every year?**

Flu strains can change from year to year, and the flu vaccine is updated annually to help protect against the anticipated circulating strains.⁵
- 3 Is the flu vaccine safe?**

Yes! The flu vaccine has been available in the United States for more than 50 years. The CDC and U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) routinely monitor the safety of all vaccines.⁶
- 4 Can the flu vaccine cause the flu?**

No! The vaccine contains an inactivated or attenuated virus, or no flu virus at all, so it's impossible to get the flu from a vaccination.⁶
- 5 Is the flu vaccine effective?**

Yes, the flu vaccine was found to prevent death in otherwise healthy children by as much as 65 percent. Also, it can reduce the risk of flu illness for the general population by up to 60 percent when the vaccine is well-matched to circulating strains.^{7,8}
- 6 How does the flu vaccine work?**

The vaccine causes your body to create antibodies that fight the flu virus. It takes approximately two weeks after vaccination for your body to build up protection against the flu, so get vaccinated as early as possible (preferably by October).^{9, 8}
- 7 How many doses of the vaccine does my child need?**

CDC recommends that children 6 months through 8 years who are receiving a flu vaccine for the first time get two doses, spaced at least 28 days apart. Children who previously received a flu vaccine only require one dose.⁴
- 8 What are common side effects of the flu vaccine?**

Common side effects can include soreness, redness, and/or swelling at the injection site, fever, headache, and/or muscle aches.⁶
- 9 Is it worse to get the flu or a flu vaccination?**

Getting a flu vaccination takes minutes, but the flu can make you sick for up to two weeks and can be serious, causing hospitalization and even death.⁹
- 10 Besides vaccination, what else can I do to keep my family healthy during flu season?**

Practice healthy habits such as washing your hands often; doing the elbow cough; avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth to lessen the spread of germs; and stay home if you don't feel well.

**Remember:
It's Not 'Just' the Flu –
It's a Serious Disease!**

For more information, visit
www.familiesfightingflu.org

References

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