

fact or fiction: flu shots

A FLU SHOT FACT-FINDING GUIDE



FICTION



I don't need a shot. I've been fine without it so far.

FACT

The flu viruses that circulate during flu season can change from year to year. So even if you were lucky enough to avoid the flu last year, it doesn't mean you won't get it this year.

FICTION



I should wait until later in the year to get a flu shot.

FACT

The best time to get a shot is before the season actually starts because it takes two weeks for the body's immune system to fully protect itself. Studies indicate that most people, even those who get an early flu shot, will experience immunity throughout the season.¹

The early bird doesn't catch the flu.

Flu season can start as early as September and last until May. It's a long season, so get your flu shot early and stay protected all season long.¹

FICTION



The flu shot doesn't work.

FACT

This fiction has a little truth to it. It's true that flu vaccine effectiveness can vary from year to year based on factors such as circulating strains, age, and health. Studies show, though, that the flu shot reduces the risk of flu between 40 to 60 percent among the general population when well-matched to the virus.²

FICTION



If I get the shot, I will get the flu.

FACT

Flu vaccines are either made with inactive flu viruses or no virus at all. This means you will not get the flu from getting the shot. There may be some minor side effects, such as soreness, redness, low-grade fever, or muscle aches.¹

Good for you, good for them.

Getting a flu shot is a healthy choice for you, your family, and the entire community. The more people who protect themselves against the virus, the less flu in general – which is good for everyone.

This information is not intended to replace the advice of a physician. It is information that is generally available. Each person has unique medical needs based on several factors including age, genetics, body type and build, medications, exposures to illness and medical history, to name a few. Always seek the advice of a physician or other qualified healthcare provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition that you are experiencing. If you are suffering from a non-emergent medical situation, it is suggested that you visit the nearest MedExpress center or your family physician. If you believe you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911.

¹ CDC: Misconceptions about Seasonal Flu and Flu Vaccine. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/misconceptions.htm>. Publication date unavailable Updated Oct. 3, 2017. Accessed Oct. 30, 2017.

² CDC: Vaccine Effectiveness – How Well Does The Flu Vaccine Work? <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/vaccineeffect.htm> Publication date unavailable. Updated Oct. 2017. Accessed Oct. 30, 2017.