



www.kdheks.gov/flu

Know the Facts

Myth #1: You can get the flu from the flu vaccine.

FALSE – This is impossible. The flu vaccine does not actually carry a live virus; it contains inactivated or weakened organisms. Vaccine manufacturers grow the flu virus in eggs, then cleanse and chemically treat the virus to deactivate it.

Myth #2: The flu is just a bad cold.

FALSE – The flu is a serious disease. It is a highly contagious viral infection of the respiratory tract (nose, throat, and lungs). In the United States, about 200,000 people are hospitalized and tens of thousands of people die each year because of the flu. Influenza kills more Americans every year than all other vaccine-preventable diseases combined.

Myth #3: It is not necessary for children to receive a flu vaccination.

FALSE – Children are two-to-three times more likely to develop influenza than adults because of their less-developed immune systems. More than 20,000 children under the age of five are hospitalized due to the flu each year. In addition, influenza kills nearly 100 children under five years of age in the United States every year.

The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older should get vaccinated against the flu every year.

Myth #4: The side effects of the vaccine are worse than the flu itself.

FALSE – Most people who get the flu shot have no reaction. Up to 25 percent may have some redness and slight swelling at the site of injection; the risk of a severe allergic reaction in those who receive a vaccination is less than one in four million.

Myth #5: You must be vaccinated in the fall to be protected against the flu.

FALSE – It is recommended to get vaccinated as soon as vaccine becomes available in your community. The flu virus tends to spread from October to May, with most cases occurring in January or February. However, vaccinations can be given at any time during the flu season – even getting a vaccination later in the season (December through March) can still help protect you from influenza.

Myth #6: Only older people need the flu vaccine.

FALSE – The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older should get vaccinated against the flu every year.

Myth #7: Taking vitamin C or Echinacea will prevent the flu.

FALSE – There is no conclusive evidence that these treatments are effective against the flu.

Myth #8: The flu vaccine is 100 percent effective in preventing the flu.

FALSE – Although influenza vaccination is not 100 percent effective, it's important that everyone 6 months and older get vaccinated against the flu to help reduce the spread of the virus in the community. The more people who get vaccinated against the flu every year, the lower the risk of catching the flu.

Myth #9: Getting the influenza vaccine every year isn't necessary.

FALSE – The vaccination needs to be given every year. Because flu viruses are constantly changing, flu vaccines may be updated from one season to the next to protect against the most recent and most commonly circulating viruses. In addition, a person's immune protection from vaccination declines over time; therefore, annual vaccination is needed for optimal protection.

Myth #10: Healthy people don't need a flu vaccine.

FALSE – The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older should get vaccinated against the flu every year. Infants younger than 6 months old are too young to be vaccinated. Protect them by getting yourself, other children and family members, and close contacts vaccinated. This will help prevent spreading the virus to infants.