

FLU SHOT MYTHS

BUSTED!

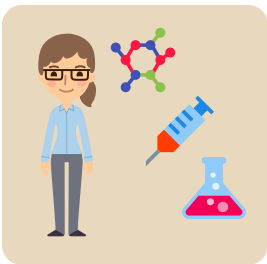
Each year the CDC estimates that as many as 710,000 hospitalizations and 56,000 deaths occur due to influenza in the United States. Public Health officials encourages everyone 6 months and older to get vaccinated against influenza.

Let's review common myths about getting the flu vaccine.



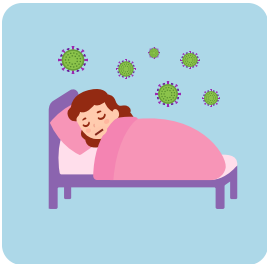
MYTH: The flu vaccine doesn't work

FACT: While effectiveness of the flu vaccine varies from year to year, **it can reduce your risk of getting the flu by about half.** In addition, if you get a flu shot and still get the flu, your symptoms will be milder and your risk of serious complications, including hospitalization, will be lower.



MYTH: There is mercury in flu vaccines

FACT: Thimerosal is an ethyl mercury-based preservative used only in vials that contain more than one dose of a vaccine (multi-dose vials) to prevent contamination. It is not the same as the type of mercury found in thermometers. **More than 80% of this year's influenza vaccine supply is thimerosal-free.** Data from many studies show no evidence of harm caused by the low doses of thimerosal in vaccines.



MYTH: The flu vaccine causes the flu

FACT: The flu vaccine is made with flu viruses that have been 'inactivated' (killed) and that therefore are not infectious, or a weakened version (live attenuated) that is unable to replicate in the respiratory tract. Both act to produce an immune response without causing infection. **Neither vaccine type can cause influenza.**



MYTH: I'm pregnant so I shouldn't get the flu vaccine

FACT: Pregnant women should especially get the flu vaccine since their immune systems are weaker than usual. A 2018 study showed that getting a flu shot reduced a pregnant woman's risk of being hospitalized due to flu by 40%. **The inactivated flu vaccine is safe at any stage of pregnancy, and protects both mom and baby before and after birth.**



MYTH: The flu isn't serious so I don't need a vaccine

FACT: Even healthy people can get the flu. Most will recover within a few weeks, but some people can develop complications including sinus and ear infections, pneumonia, heart or brain inflammations. **As many as 56,000 deaths occur each year due to influenza, including an average of 60 in Montana.**



Getting a flu vaccine yourself can also protect people around you, including those who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness, like babies and young children, the elderly, and people with certain chronic health conditions.