



6 FLU MYTHS: GET THE FACTS!

Adapted from www.familiesfightingflu.org and www.cdc.gov/flu

MYTH: *You can get the flu (influenza) from the flu vaccine.*

FACT: This is impossible since injected flu vaccine only contains dead virus, and a dead virus can't infect you. Nasal vaccine does contain live virus, but the virus is specially engineered to remove the parts of the virus that can make people sick.

MYTH: *The flu is just a bad cold.*

FACT: 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. Complications of flu can include bacterial pneumonia, ear and sinus infections, and worsening of chronic conditions such as heart disease, asthma or diabetes.

MYTH: *The side effects of the vaccine are worse than the flu itself.*

FACT: Most people who get the flu shot have no reaction. The most common side effects are low grade fever and achiness, soreness, redness or swelling where the flu shot was given or nasal congestion after the flu vaccine nasal spray.

MYTH: *The flu vaccine is 100 percent effective in preventing the flu.*

FACT: Although flu vaccination is not 100 percent effective, it's important that everyone 6 months and older get vaccinated to help increase "herd immunity". When more people get vaccinated against the flu, less flu can spread through the community which protects the individuals who can't be vaccinated.

MYTH: *Getting the influenza vaccine every year isn't necessary.*

FACT: 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.

MYTH: *Healthy people don't need a flu vaccine.*

FACT: The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older get vaccinated against the flu every year. It's especially important for those at higher risk of serious complications from the flu - people with preexisting medical conditions, adults 65 years and older, and pregnant women - get a flu shot. Healthy adults can infect others beginning 24 hours before symptoms appear. Since infants less than 6 months old are too young to be vaccinated, you can protect them by getting a flu shot.



WEST WINDSOR HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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