

Still no flu shot? It's not too late

The flu causes hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and thousands of deaths each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It's a serious disease that is especially dangerous for babies, the elderly and those with health conditions, such as heart disease.

Get your flu shot if you haven't done so yet. You may be wondering if getting a shot now will be helpful, and the answer is "yes!" Here's why:

- Getting the shot now means you could be protected before the peak of the holiday season. It takes about 2 weeks to get the full immunity from a flu shot.
- Flu season usually continues until March or even April of each year. Getting the shot now means months of protection!
- As long as the flu keeps spreading, the flu shot can keep you from getting sick.
- If you do get sick, your illness will probably be much milder.
- No one likes to have a fever, chills, cough, headache, sore throat, body aches, nausea or vomiting. Getting the flu shot now means you reduce your risk of getting all these symptoms from the flu this season. The flu is much more serious than a cold.



Top flu shot myths busted

Many people have heard myths about the flu shot and may wonder if it's safe and effective. Check out these common misconceptions and the truth about the flu shot:

Myth: You can get sick from the flu shot.

Fact: The flu shot cannot make you sick with the flu. It contains inactivated (killed) viruses. Some people have mild side effects that last only a day or so that include aches, soreness and a low fever. These side effects are much shorter and milder than getting the flu.

Myth: I got the flu shot last year, so I don't need a new one.

Fact: The flu shot changes each year based on what flu viruses are going around. Experts choose several viruses that are most likely to make people sick and include them in the vaccine. Last year's vaccine may not offer protection against this year's viruses.

Myth: It's better to just get the flu and get immunity that way.

Fact: While most healthy people will recover from the flu without problems, this is a dangerous risk to take. Anyone who gets the flu can be at risk of having serious problems. And, there is a high risk of spreading it to loved ones, especially babies, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems.

