

The flu vaccine: myths vs. facts



A yearly influenza (flu) vaccine is the best way to protect yourself against the flu. However, common myths about the vaccine can make people hesitant about being vaccinated, so it's important to lay out the facts.

**Get a flu shot — it's covered
by your plan at 100%**

Protect yourself and your family.
Go to my-flu-shot.com to find a flu shot
location near you.

Myth: I can catch the flu from a flu shot.

Fact: Flu vaccines do not make you sick with the flu. Flu shots use inactivated (dead) flu viruses. Nasal spray flu vaccines use live viruses that are weakened. These safe and effective flu vaccines do not cause illness. Your immune system responds to these vaccines by developing antibodies to protect you against a flu infection.

Myth: Handwashing and masks are enough to avoid the flu.

Fact: Practicing good hygiene, wearing masks, and social distancing all help to control the spread of COVID-19 as well as the flu, but the most effective protection against the flu is the flu vaccine. It helps prevent infection from the virus, lowers the severity of symptoms in case of infection, and reduces the number of flu-related doctor's visits each year.

Myth: The COVID-19 shot can protect me from the flu.

Fact: The COVID-19 vaccine protects you from a coronavirus, which is different from a flu virus. Even though the symptoms for both infections are similar, only the flu vaccine has been proven to protect against the flu. If you haven't received a COVID-19 vaccine yet, go to vaccines.gov to find a location near you.



Myth: It isn't safe to receive both the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine.

Fact: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there is no interaction between these two vaccines. You don't have to wait between vaccinations and can receive both the flu vaccine and the COVID-19 vaccine at the same time.

Myth: The flu vaccine is not effective.

Fact: While the effectiveness of the flu vaccine can vary each season, it is on average about 40% to 60% effective in reducing the risk of infection in the overall population. During the 2019-2020 flu season, flu vaccination prevented an estimated 7.5 million flu cases, 3.7 million flu-related medical visits, and more than 100,000 hospitalizations.

Myth: I don't need to receive a flu vaccine again because I've already received one in the past.

Fact: It is important to receive a flu vaccine every year because the flu virus constantly changes. The flu vaccine is updated each year to target the most common virus strains for the upcoming flu season.

Myth: The flu shot causes severe side effects.

Fact: While it is true that you could experience side effects, they are typically mild. Soreness, low-grade fever, and headache are among the possible side effects after vaccination. It doesn't mean you have the flu. It means your body is responding to the vaccine by making antibodies. These symptoms are much less severe than symptoms of an actual flu and should go away after about two days.

Myth: If I'm vaccinated, my child does not need a flu shot.

Fact: Being vaccinated helps prevent you from getting the flu, but it doesn't protect your child. It is possible for your child to pick up the flu virus from other people who may or may not be vaccinated.

Go to my-flu-shot.com to find a flu vaccination site near you.

Sources:
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov).
Reuters website: [reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com).
UCSF Health website: [ucsfhealth.org](https://www.ucsfhealth.org).

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield is the trade name of: In Colorado: Rocky Mountain Hospital and Medical Service, Inc. HMO products underwritten by HMO Colorado, Inc. Copies of Colorado network access plans are available on request from member services or can be obtained by going to anthem.com/co/networkaccess. In Connecticut: Anthem Health Plans, Inc. In Georgia: Blue Cross Blue Shield Healthcare Plan of Georgia, Inc. In Indiana: Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc. In Kentucky: Anthem Health Plans of Kentucky, Inc. In Maine: Anthem Health Plans of Maine, Inc. In Missouri (excluding 30 counties in the Kansas City area): RightCHOICE® Managed Care, Inc. (RIT), Healthy Alliance® Life Insurance Company (HALIC), and HMO Missouri, Inc. RIT and certain affiliates administer non-HMO benefits underwritten by HALIC and HMO benefits underwritten by HMO Missouri, Inc. RIT and certain affiliates only provide administrative services for self-funded plans and do not underwrite benefits. In Nevada: Rocky Mountain Hospital and Medical Service, Inc. HMO products underwritten by HMO Colorado, Inc., dba HMO Nevada. In New Hampshire: Anthem Health Plans of New Hampshire, Inc. HMO plans are administered by Anthem Health Plans of New Hampshire, Inc. and underwritten by Matthew Thornton Health Plan, Inc. In Ohio: Community Insurance Company. In Virginia: Anthem Health Plans of Virginia, Inc. trades as Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Virginia, and its service area is all of Virginia except for the City of Fairfax, the Town of Vienna, and the area east of State Route 123. In Wisconsin: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wisconsin (BCBSWI), underwrites or administers PPO and indemnity policies and underwrites the out of network benefits in POS policies offered by Compcare Health Services Insurance Corporation (Compcare) or Wisconsin Collaborative Insurance Corporation (WCIC). Compcare underwrites or administers HMO or POS policies; WCIC underwrites or administers Well Priority HMO or POS policies. Independent licensees of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Anthem is a registered trademark of Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc.