Fact or Fiction: Flu Shots

A Flu Shot Fact-Finding Guide

### Fiction

**I don’t need a shot. I’ve been fine without it so far.**

**Fact**

The flu viruses that circulate during flu season can change from year to year. So even if you were lucky enough to avoid the flu last year, it doesn’t mean you won’t get it this year.

### Fiction

**I should wait until later in the year to get a flu shot.**

**Fact**

The best time to get a shot is before the season actually starts because it takes two weeks for the body’s immune system to fully protect itself. Studies indicate that most people, even those who get an early flu shot, will experience immunity throughout the season.¹

### Fiction

The early bird doesn’t catch the flu.

Flu season can start as early as September and last until May. It’s a long season, so get your flu shot early and stay protected all season long.¹

### Fiction

The flu shot doesn’t work.

**Fact**

This fiction has a little truth to it. It’s true that flu vaccine effectiveness can vary from year to year based on factors such as circulating strains, age, and health. Studies show, though, that the flu shot reduces the risk of flu between 40 to 60 percent among the general population when well-matched to the virus.²

### Fiction

If I get the shot, I will get the flu.

**Fact**

Flu vaccines are either made with inactive flu viruses or no virus at all. This means you will not get the flu from getting the shot. There may be some minor side effects, such as soreness, redness, low-grade fever, or muscle aches.¹

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