



# Give it your **BEST SHOT**

Protect yourself and your family from the flu today.

Kaiser Permanente Healthy Workforce

## 4 Flu Myths & 4 Flu Facts – Setting the Record Straight

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**FLU MYTH** **The Flu Vaccine can give you the flu.** This is one of the most common and widespread flu myths even though it is biologically impossible to get the flu from inactivated vaccine. Medical experts suspect two reasons for the persistence of this myth. One, people mistake the mild side effects of the vaccine for the flu. Two, flu season coincides with a time of the year when many other cold and respiratory illnesses are circulating.

**FLU FACT** **The Flu Vaccine does not give people the flu.** The flu vaccine can take up to two weeks to become effective enough to provide protection. People may still catch a cold or other virus during that time or even catch another flu virus the vaccine is not designed to match.

Some side effects make people think they got sick but in fact that is their body's response to building immunity. Mild body aches, runny nose, nasal congestion, and headache may be side effects from the vaccination but it is NOT the Flu.

Flu Vaccine contains inactivated or 'dead' virus which cannot cause infection. Nasal Mist contains a scientifically modified and engineered flu virus (weakened) which also does not cause infection. The virus in the mist has been specially engineered to remove parts that make people sick.

**FLU MYTH** **Flu is annoying but not dangerous for the young and healthy.** Those who are younger than 65 and in good health often believe that they are not at risk for serious complications from Influenza.

**FLU FACT** **The flu is a serious respiratory disease.** While it's true that those people most likely to become seriously ill or die from seasonal flu are over 65, the flu is a serious **risk** for **Everyone**, even young adults. **90% of H1N1 deaths have been in people under the age of 65.** Each year in the United States there are **25-30 million** cases of the flu and of those 200, 000 each year are hospitalized. Even healthy individuals who may recover from influenza without complications should understand that failure to vaccinate **endangers others**; children, the elderly, and our **patients**.



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**FLU MYTH I never get the flu.** One of the most common explanations people give who choose not to be vaccinated is, “I never get the flu”. Many people think they can protect themselves with good hand hygiene, vitamin supplements, plenty of rest and a healthy diet.

**FLU FACT Anyone can get the flu.** There is no natural immunity to flu. The past is no indicator of whether one will end up in the percentage of adults who get the flu this year. The flu is a **highly contagious airborne illness** and while good hand hygiene is very important, it cannot prevent you from being exposed to the flu. Being healthy and eating well will help your immune system fight off new infections but does not provide protection against exposure to influenza. There is some mixed evidence that supplements (including Echinacea and large doses of vitamin C) may help fend off a cold but there is no data that suggests it will protect against influenza.

**FLU MYTH Only people with symptoms can spread the flu.** Some Healthcare workers believe if they do catch the flu they will go home or simply stay home and not infect others.

**FLU FACT People can be infectious before they develop symptoms.** Up to 30% of people infected by flu virus have NO or only slight symptoms but are still contagious and can transmit flu. In fact, **Healthcare workers are a major source of flu outbreaks in healthcare settings.** An unvaccinated healthcare worker can transmit flu to patients 24-36 hours before they are symptomatic with the flu.

**GET THE FACTS. GET A FLU SHOT.** Vaccination for influenza is the best way to prevent transmission of this very serious infectious respiratory illness. Failure to vaccinate endangers others. It is important all KP employees consider getting vaccinated to protect our patients, co-workers, families and our community.