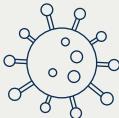


UNDERSTANDING THE RISKS

Getting Flu vs. Getting Vaccinated



We all want to make the best health choices for our children. So how risky is the flu compared to the vaccines to prevent flu?

FLU FAST FACTS



HOW CONTAGIOUS?

Contagious. Between 9 and 41 million people in the United States get the flu each year. During the 2022–2023 flu season, 12 million children got the flu and more than half required medical care.^{1,2}



HOW SERIOUS?

Typically mild to moderate.

But serious complications can include:

Hospitalization: About 1 in 86 people in the 2022–2023 flu season³

Pneumonia: Many deaths caused by flu happen because people develop a bacterial co-infection, such as pneumonia.¹

Death: About 1 in 1,550 people in the 2022–2023 flu season—about 80% of pediatric flu deaths occur in unvaccinated children.^{3,4}

VACCINE FAST FACTS



HOW EFFECTIVE?

About 50% effective at preventing flu and flu-related emergency department visits among children. Vaccinated people who get the flu usually have more mild illness and are less likely to be hospitalized.^{5,6}



HOW SAFE?

Generally, if 1 million vaccine doses are given, then 1 to 2 people may have a severe allergic reaction.⁷ Less than 2 doses in 1 million result in Guillain-Barré syndrome.*⁸



SAFETY RECORDS

Flu vaccines have been in use since 1945. Hundreds of millions of people have safely gotten the vaccines.^{9,10}



MYTH BUSTER

Can flu vaccines give you the flu? No. Flu vaccines CANNOT give anyone the flu because most do not contain live flu virus.^{9,11}

*This is a lower-than-expected rate of Guillain-Barré syndrome for those who had an infection from the influenza virus.⁸



Five separate safety systems continuously monitor all vaccines for as long as the vaccines are given.¹²

Learn more at hhs.gov/immunization/basics/safety/index.html.

COMPARING THE TWO

FLU

VACCINES TO PREVENT FLU

Common Mild to Moderate Symptoms and Common Side Effects^{9,13,14}

Common symptoms of flu last up to 2 weeks and can include:

- Fever* or feeling feverish, and chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Vomiting or diarrhea

Common side effects of vaccines to prevent flu are usually mild and last 1–3 days. If side effects occur, they can include:

- Soreness, redness, or swelling where the vaccine was given
- Fever
- Headache
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Upset stomach

*It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.

Rare, More Serious Symptoms or Complications and Rare Side Effects^{7,8,9,13,14,15}

Serious symptoms or complications of flu vary and can include:

- Guillain-Barré syndrome*
- Pneumonia
- Myocarditis (heart inflammation)
- Encephalitis (brain inflammation)
- Myositis (muscle inflammation)
- Multi-organ failure
- Sepsis

Serious side effects of vaccines to prevent flu vary and can include:

- Guillain-Barré syndrome*
- Severe allergic reaction (generally, for every 1 million vaccines administered in the United States, only about 1–2 doses results in a severe allergic reaction)

*Studies show about 1 or 2 people out of every 1 million people who get a flu vaccine may get Guillain-Barré syndrome. However, studies also show that it is more likely that a person will get Guillain-Barré syndrome after getting the flu than after vaccination.

Sources:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/flu-burden/php/about/faq.html>
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