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Debunking Medical Myths: The Facts About the Flu

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The Facts About the Flu

Why Everyone Should Get the Shot



Can the vaccine give me the flu?

The general population has concerns over if the influenza vaccine causes the flu. While the vaccine can cause adverse effects in 15% of patients, these effects are usually minimal and include a sore arm at the injection site, nasal congestion, slight fever, and a sore throat. These side effects may seem like a cold, or even the flu, but they are instead a result of the body forming a protective response to the virus.

Additionally, some people who are exposed to the flu virus can become sick right before or right after they receive their vaccine. While they may attribute this illness to the vaccine, they are actually sick because the flu shot has not had enough time to create protection from the virus.

This concern is considered a psychological barrier, where there is a misunderstood risk perception or a lack of understanding of the social or health benefits. Other barriers can be physical and related to an individual's ability to receive the shot or to interactions with the healthcare system.

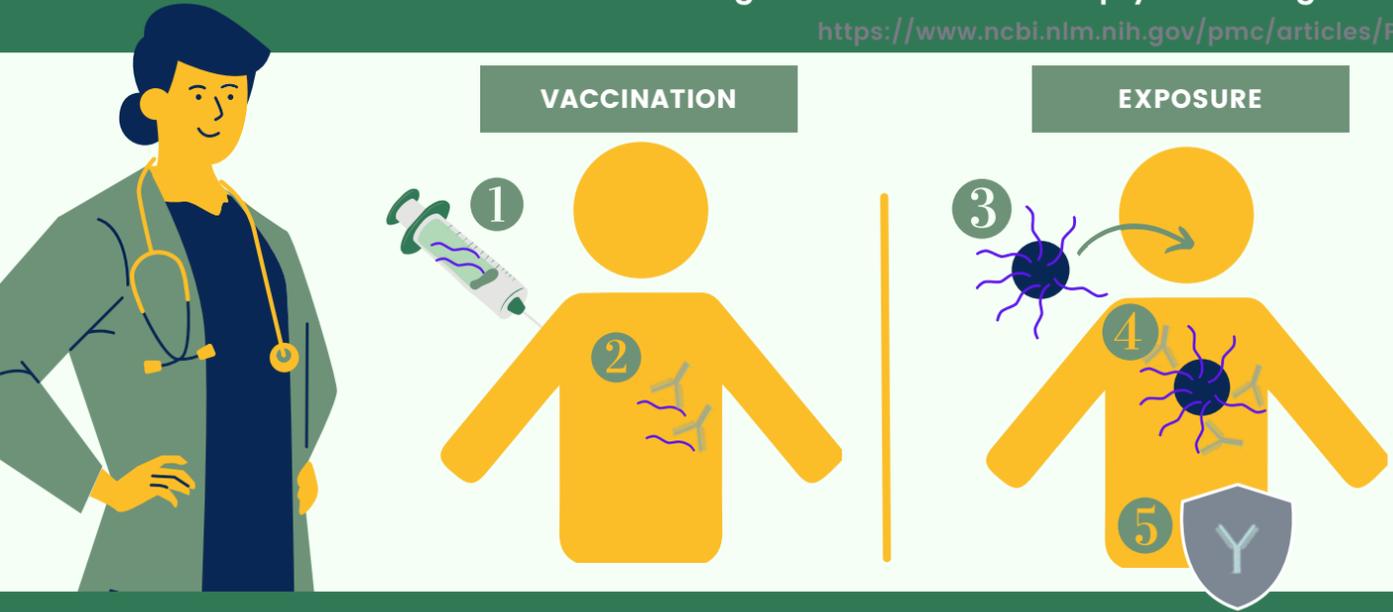
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28125629/>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8581668/>

How does the vaccine work?

1 + 2 A protein from the virus is injected, but this piece of virus is designed so it cannot give you the flu. Over the course of about two weeks, your body makes protective antibodies against the viral protein.

3 + 4 + 5 If you are later exposed to the virus, your immune system keeps a memory of these antibodies and will be able to fight the virus and keep you from getting sick.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6491184/>



Should I get the flu vaccine?

The influenza vaccine causes **direct protection** in vaccinated individuals and promotes **reduced transmission** of the influenza virus. It is especially helpful for individuals more at risk for the flu, including **young children**, those with **underlying medical conditions** such as chronic lung or heart diseases, **pregnant women**, **obese individuals**, and **older adults**. The most common strains of flu virus change each year, and so does the vaccine in order to provide the best protection. Influenza can be a very serious illness. From 2019 to 2020, the flu caused an estimated 38 million illnesses, 400,000 hospitalizations, and 22,000 deaths.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34748378/>

However, with 52% of the U.S. population 6 months and older vaccinated, in 2019–2020, the flu shot prevented...



<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/resource-center/freeresources/graphics/flu-vaccine-protected-infographic.htm>

Therefore, everyone should get the yearly flu shot in order to protect themselves and their communities.

