

Not Sure About the Flu Shot? Here's What You Should Know:

There are a lot of myths out there about the flu shot. Even if your doctor says it's okay, you may still have doubts. So let's talk about the facts.

I got the flu shot last year. I don't need one this year.

Fact: This year's vaccine is made for this year's flu season. The viruses that cause the flu may change from year to year. So last year's shot may not protect you.

I already feel sick or had the flu, so the flu shot can't help me now.

Fact: If you feel sick or have a fever, check with your doctor first. Your doctor may have you go ahead with the shot. It will depend on why you're sick and how sick you are. Your doctor is the best person to help you decide when to get the flu shot.

I'm afraid the flu shot might give me the flu.

Fact: You can't get the flu from the flu shot. You may have mild side effects (like a sore arm or runny nose). If you do get sick after a flu shot, it may be for another reason. Think about:

- ◆ **You could be sick with something else.** The flu shot does not protect against other viruses, such as a cold virus. It also does not treat other medical problems.
- ◆ **You could already have the flu.** The flu shot takes two weeks to work. Some people are infected with the flu virus before the shot has time to protect them. Also, the shot does not always stop all forms of the flu. This is because new flu viruses may become a problem this season. But even if you get the flu, it's not from the flu shot.

If I'm pregnant, can the flu shot harm my baby or cause autism?

Fact: The flu shot isn't bad for you or your baby. The American Academy of Pediatrics says many studies have shown no relationship between vaccines and autism. But, getting the flu virus while pregnant can harm both mother and baby. It can lead to early labor and birth defects. Pregnant women should get the shot to stay safe.

I got the flu shot before I got pregnant. Should I get a second dose to protect my baby?

Fact: You don't need the shot again—one dose is enough. But if your pregnancy lasts into the next flu season, then you **should** get the new flu shot. This could keep both you and your baby safe.

If you still have questions about the flu shot, call your program nurse today.