

**MYTH**

Flu is just like having a heavy cold

**FACT**

An estimated average of 8,000 people die of flu each year in England

A bad bout of flu is much worse than a heavy cold. [Flu symptoms](#) come on suddenly and sometimes severely. They include fever, chills, headaches and aching muscles, as well as a cough and sore throat. You're likely to spend two or three days in bed. If you get complications caused by flu, you could become seriously ill and have to go to hospital.

**MYTH**

Having the Flu jab gives you flu

**FACT**

No, it doesn't. It's impossible to get flu from the flu vaccine because the adult vaccine doesn't contain live viruses.

A very small number of people experience side effects such as aching muscles, but this is simply the immune system responding to the vaccine.

Read more about [how the injected flu vaccine works](#).

The children's nasal spray flu vaccine contains live but weakened flu viruses that won't give your child flu. Read more about the [children's flu vaccine](#).

**MYTH**

Flu can be treated with antibiotics

**FACT**

No, it can't. Flu is caused by viruses – antibiotics only work against bacteria. You may be prescribed antiviral medicines to treat your flu, however these don't cure flu but will make you less infectious to others and will reduce the length of time you're ill.

To be effective, antivirals must be given within a day or two of symptoms appearing. A bacterial infection may occur as a result of having the flu, in which case you may be given antibiotics.

Find out more about why [antibiotics shouldn't be overused](#).

**MYTH**

I'm pregnant so I can't have the jab because it will affect my baby

**FACT**

Yes you can. You should have the vaccine no matter what stage of pregnancy you're in. If you're pregnant you could become very ill if you get Flu, which could also be bad for your baby. Having the jab can also protect your baby against flu after they're born and during the early months of life.

Read more about [the flu jab in pregnancy](#).

**MYTH**

I had the Flu jab last year so I don't need it again

**FACT**

The flu jab doesn't protect you for life. The World Health Organization (WHO) predicts which flu viruses will circulate, and these are different every year. One flu vaccine will provide protection for only the flu season that year.

**MYTH**

I take vitamin C to prevent against flu

**FACT**

No, it can't. Many people think that taking daily vitamin C supplements will stop them getting flu, but there's no evidence to prove this.

**MYTH**

It's already too late if you've had flu this year

**Fact**

Whilst it's better to have the flu vaccine as soon as it becomes available, it's always worth getting vaccinated before the end of the flu season (March). As there are usually several flu viruses circulating each year, you could go on to catch another strain.

**Myth**

You can only get the flu vaccine from your doctor

**Fact**

While you can get the vaccination from your GP, many pharmacists have also been trained to administer the vaccination.

**Myth**

Flu vaccines are only for the very young or the very old

**Fact**

While complications from the flu are most dangerous for the very young or elderly, the flu can hit strong and healthy people hard – it's more than a heavy cold.