

# FLU FACTS

There are many myths surround flu and the flu vaccine... so here are the facts

- 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 2 or 3 days in bed if you are a healthy adult, but children under six months of age, older people and those with underlying health conditions such as respiratory disease, cardiac disease or immunosuppression, as well as pregnant women are at risk of serious complications which can involve hospitalisation
  - The flu vaccine cannot give you flu, the vaccine given to adults contains inactivated flu viruses, so it cannot give you flu
  - Your arm may feel a bit sore where you were injected, and some people get a slight temperature and aching muscles for a couple of days afterwards. Other reactions are very rare
  - Flu cannot be treated with antibiotics
  - Flu is caused by viruses. Antibiotics only work against bacteria. A bacterial infection may occur as a result of having the flu, in which case you may be given antibiotics
  - The viruses that cause flu can change every year, so you need a vaccination that matches the new viruses each year
  - The vaccine usually provides protection for the duration of that year's flu season
- Even if you think you have had flu, you should still have the vaccination. As flu is caused by several viruses, the immunity you naturally developed will only protect you against one of them. You could go on to catch another strain, so it's recommended you have the vaccine even if you have recently had flu. Also, what you thought was flu could have been something else
- Many people think that taking daily vitamin C supplements will stop them getting flu, but there's no evidence to prove this.
- If you're pregnant you should have the flu vaccine, no matter what stage of pregnancy you're at, you could get very ill with flu, which could also be bad for your baby. Having the vaccine can also protect your baby against flu after they're born and during the early months of life
- The nasal spray flu vaccine is recommended on the NHS for all healthy 2-3-year-olds, plus
  - children in primary school. In addition, children "at risk" of serious illness if they catch flu are eligible for a flu vaccine on the NHS, this includes children with a pre-existing illness
  - The children's nasal spray flu vaccine contains live but weakened flu viruses that will not give your child flu

For more information about flu and the flu vaccine, visit: <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-body/facts-about-flu-and-the-flu-vaccine/>

