



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Dayton & Montgomery County

Flu

Frequently Asked

Questions &

ANSWERS



Public Health -
Dayton & Montgomery
County's
Medical Director,
Michael Dohn, MD



Q

A

Can the flu really be that bad?

YES! The flu is a contagious disease affecting the lungs which can lead to serious illness. Although many people with influenza have mild illness, some people may become very sick or even die. This even applies to healthy individuals.

Q

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Can the flu vaccine give me a case of the flu?

No! The flu vaccine cannot give you the flu. Common side effects from the vaccine are a sore arm and possibly a low fever or achiness. These side effects, if experienced, are mild and short-lived. The risk of suffering the side effects is much better than becoming ill with the flu and missing several days of work or possibly becoming ill enough to be hospitalized.

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What if I got a flu vaccine once and still became sick?

Even with the flu vaccine there are still several reasons why one may have flu-like symptoms:

- A non-flu virus may be going around. The flu vaccine can only prevent illness caused by flu viruses.
- You may have been exposed to the flu virus after you got vaccinated but before the vaccine took effect. About two weeks are needed to be fully protected from the flu after vaccination.
- No vaccine is 100% effective. However, if you get influenza after receiving the vaccine, you are likely to be less ill than if you had not gotten the vaccine.

Q

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Is it too late for me to be protected this season?

No! Flu seasons are very unpredictable. They can begin in the early fall and last late into the spring. It's never too late to protect yourself, as well as your friends and family.

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I got a flu vaccine last year. Why do I need another one this year?

Immunity from last year's vaccine declines over time, so you may not have enough immunity to protect you this season. Also, the vaccine includes changes every year, so you should get vaccinated with this season's vaccine to protect yourself against the most likely strains of the flu virus.

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Is the flu vaccine safe?

Flu vaccines have been around for over 50 years. They have a very good safety track record. The flu vaccine, which is closely monitored by the CDC and the FDA, is made the same way every year. According to the CDC, hundreds of millions of flu vaccines have been given safely.

For more influenza related information, visit <http://cdc.gov/flu>