

Still Putting Off the Flu Shot? 5 Flu Shot Myths Debunked

Flu season in the Triangle is officially underway, with some confirmed cases throughout North Carolina [popping up this month](#), including two flu-related deaths in the Piedmont and Eastern North Carolina, according to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. The Department reported a total of 219 [flu-related deaths last season in North Carolina](#), and our state was among the first in the nation last year to report cases of the flu. With the holidays fast-approaching, many are we planning travel for the holidays or getting ready to be a host. Couple that with chillier temps, and it's a recipe for spreading germs. Despite that, many forget to put the flu shot on their holiday checklist.

For many, the flu shot and other vaccinations are covered under some form of insurance or through Medicare Part B – and often with no out-of-pocket cost. Affordable Health Care Act plans are required to cover flu shots as well as number of other vaccinations.

For those on the fence, or putting off their shot, the local Walgreens Pharmacies in Chatham County have put together--and debunked--the **Top 5 Flu Shot Myths:**

MYTH #1: You can get sick from the flu shot.

FACT: The flu shot isn't live, so it can't cause the flu. Sometimes patients are exposed to the flu before receiving the shot, so when they get sick, it's really from the virus they were exposed to previously. The flu shot typically takes up to two weeks to become effective, so during that time, you could become ill with the flu. The viruses the flu shot protects you from are respiratory in nature. The most common side effects from the influenza shot are soreness, redness, tenderness, or swelling where the shot was given; however, low-grade fever, headache and muscle aches also may occur.

MYTH #2: Flu shots are ineffective most of the time.

FACT: *The vaccine greatly reduces your chances of getting the flu, and can also make your illness milder if you do get sick. The flu shot also can help protect people around you who are at a higher risk of getting a serious illness, such as elderly people, patients with chronic conditions and young children. This extra protection improves the chances of having a happy, healthy and illness-free flu season.*

MYTH #3: *There's no point in getting a flu shot if it's later in the flu season.*

FACT: *Getting the flu shot is important even if it's later in the season! Sometimes there's naturally a late onset of the virus, so the months in which flu is most prevalent get pushed back a month or two. In recent years, according to the North Carolina Department of Health & Services, we've seen peak flu as late as January or even February. And there have been cases recorded in North Carolina well past what's considered to be flu season. Because flu viruses are always changing—it's difficult to say when flu season ends.*

MYTH #4: *There is only one type of flu shot each year.*

FACT: *Each year, the seasonal influenza vaccine includes the strands that researchers found will be most prevalent throughout the year. This year, there is an option for the Trivalent (3-strain), which protects from the three most common flu strains, or the Quadrivalent (4-strain), which includes one additional strain. There are also immune-boosting influenza vaccines for those ages 65 and above, and preservative-free versions for pregnant women or those who are allergic to mercury.*

MYTH #5: *Flu shots are only for really sick people.*

***FACT:** The flu does not discriminate. Healthy individuals are just as likely to be infected and may suffer serious consequences without an immunization. Many who are infected do not show symptoms and can act as carriers of the virus, infecting their loved ones. Prevention is always better than cure. Your best defense against the flu is to get vaccinated.*

*With Walgreens' [**Get a Shot, Give a Shot campaign**](#), for every vaccination administered at their Chatham County pharmacies, Walgreens will donate the value of a lifesaving vaccine through the UN Foundation, which has provided more than 20 million polio and measles vaccines to people in developing countries.*