

Flu fiction

There's more truth in the Loch Ness Monster than there is in some of the myths about flu! These myths are highly infectious and we need to stop them spreading!



FOUR KEY MESSAGES

- **You do not need to be feeling ill or have any signs before you spread the flu virus and children are REALLY good at spreading flu.**
- **By the time you feel unwell, the damage is already done!**
- **The flu vaccine cannot give you flu.**
- **Side effects like a temperature, headache or joint aches show that the vaccine is working helping you to build protection against the virus.**



Healthy people don't get seasonal flu. FALSE!

Anyone can pick up the virus. If you can catch flu, you can pass it on to those who are at risk of serious illness.

Flu is a mild illness so I don't need to be vaccinated. FALSE!

For most of us who catch it, flu is just horrible. For some people it is much more serious. Around the world three to five million people get severe illness and between 250,000 and 500,000 people die from flu. The flu virus changes every year so just because you've not had the flu before doesn't mean you won't get it this year or pass it on. You can carry and pass the virus on to others without having any symptoms yourself.



The side effects of the vaccination are really bad. FALSE!

Side effects of the flu vaccine are mild. Some children may experience side effects that are similar to those of the flu, such as aching muscles, but this is simply your immune system responding to what it thinks is an attack from flu.



I've had the flu vaccine before so I don't need it again. FALSE!

People should be vaccinated against seasonal flu every year. We don't know how long last year's vaccination protection will last and the viruses change every year. So even if you had the nasal vaccine last year, you should be vaccinated again this year.



The flu jab isn't safe. FALSE!

The risk of having a serious (anaphylactic) reaction to the seasonal flu vaccine is less than one in a million. It is much less than the risk of getting seriously ill from having the flu itself. If you have a serious allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to hens' eggs, you may still be able to be vaccinated, but under specialist clinical supervision.

The seasonal flu vaccines and nasal vaccine for children are some of the safest vaccines in the world and are given to millions in the UK each year.



See the Flu Heroes at <https://www.nhs.uk/video/Pages/flu-heroes-nasal-flu-spray-for-kids.aspx>