

This information is forwarded by the **Love Thy Neighbor Ministry** at Saint Rose of Lima Catholic Church, Milton FL.

Source of Information: The Catholic Foundation of Northwest Florida. Due to the many references, some may not be current but have many useful reference sources. Emails are sent using the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) method.

This quality of life series focuses primarily on senior citizens plus other supplemental information. You do not have to be a Senior to make use of this information. If you know of a parishioner or neighbor who could use this information you are invited to give them a copy of this email. Fellowship through improved communications is guided by the second greatest commandment. Sometimes an act of kindness can be as simple as a phone call, a visit, or receipt of an email.

Suggestion: for easy reference to this information, create a separate folder to file this email in.

For information about our Parish, click on the following link: <http://parishesonline.com/scripts/HostedSites/Org.asp?ID=14423>

**Our parish spirit is rising, is rising.**

Flu Shots: Facts and Fiction

[http://www.legacygifts.org/savvy\\_senior.jsp?WebID=GL2004-0129&D=200839](http://www.legacygifts.org/savvy_senior.jsp?WebID=GL2004-0129&D=200839)

Savvy Senior

**Dear Savvy Senior,**

What are the facts on flu shots? Do they really help that much and can a flu shot actually give you the flu?

Skeptical Senior

Dear Skeptical,

A flu shot doesn't guarantee you won't get the flu (influenza), but it does lower your risk. And if you do happen to get sick, you probably won't get as sick as you would without it. Here are the facts and fiction on flu shots.

### **Flu Facts**

Each year 5% to 20% of the U.S. population gets the flu, more than 200,000 people have to be hospitalized for it, and around 36,000 will die because of it. Here are some key facts to know:

While there's no fool-proof way to prevent the flu, your best protection is a flu shot or the inhaled FluMist (FDA-approved only for healthy people ages 5 to 49) every fall. It's especially important for kids under 5, adults over 65 and anyone with medical conditions, such as asthma, bronchitis or heart disease because they are at high risk for complications.

Some studies done over the past year have indicated that the flu vaccine may not work as well in people over 70 but the evidence is not conclusive. Most health experts still highly recommend an annual flu shot for seniors noting that even if the studies are correct, some protection is better than none.

Most people who get the flu shot have no reaction to it, but up to 25% may have some redness and slight swelling at the site and around 5% may experience a slight fever, chills and headache within 24 hours. These symptoms end within a few days.

You need to get a flu shot every year because the flu virus mutates from year-to-year, so a vaccination from last season is ineffective against this year's strains.

People who are allergic to eggs, latex, who have a history of Guillain-Barr syndrome, or who've had a severe reaction to a flu shot in the past should not get a flu shot without consulting their doctor first. People who are ill with a fever should wait to get vaccinated until their symptoms pass.

### **Flu Fiction**

Myths and misconceptions keep many people from getting flu shots. One of the most common misperceptions is that a flu shot will give you the flu. But the truth is that the vaccine is made from killed influenza viruses so it's impossible to get the flu from a flu shot. Some other common misconceptions:

"Flu is just a bad cold." This is fiction. Although it's considered a respiratory infection, it affects the entire body, causing high fever accompanied by body aches, headaches, nausea and dehydration. Even after the infection is gone (it can last up to two weeks), people can be weak for several more days.

"You can get the flu from wet hair or cold weather." Not true. You get the flu by coming into contact with someone who is infected. In the cold of winter, when people cluster indoors, exposure to the flu virus is more likely but cold weather itself doesn't cause the flu.

"The flu shot is only for high-risk people." False. People at high risk definitely need the vaccination but those at low risk also should get the shot to help keep the flu from spreading.

"If I haven't had the flu by December, it's too late." False, again. Flu season can extend through May. Although it's never too late in

the season to get the shot, the best time to get vaccinated is in October or November.

**Savvy Tips:** You can get a flu shot at your doctor's office, local clinic or various other locations. Medicare Part B pays for flu shots but if you're not covered, there are plenty of places that offer them for free. To help you locate a vaccination site call your county health department, the CDC information line at 800-232-4636, or visit [www.flucliniclocator.org](http://www.flucliniclocator.org).