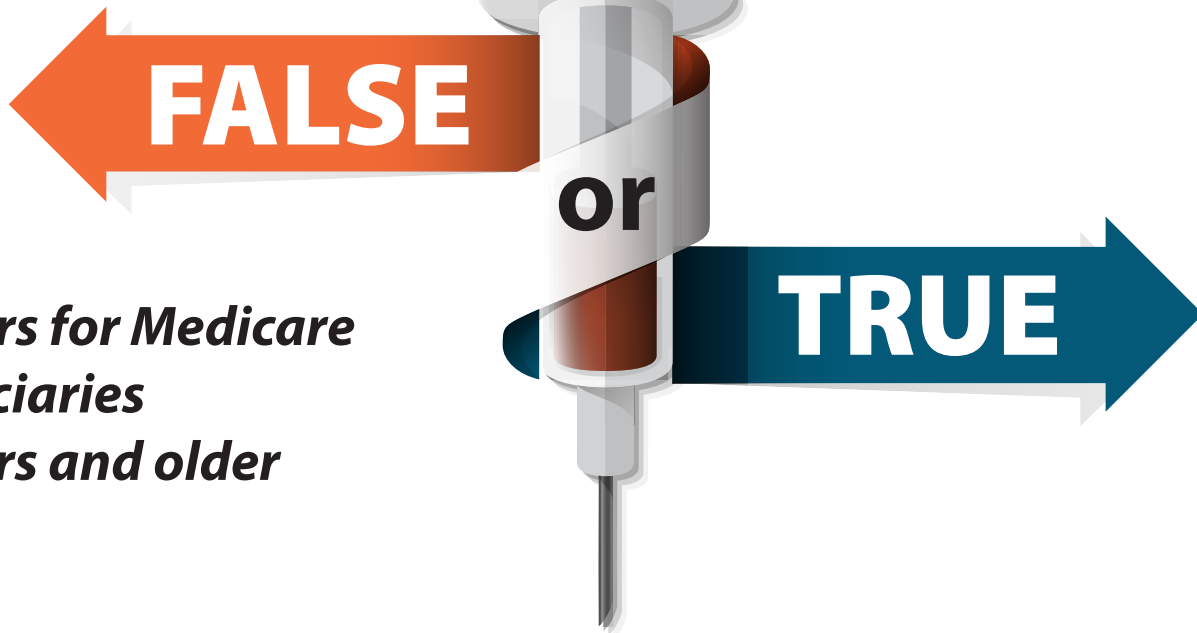


# FLU SHOT



## *Answers for Medicare beneficiaries 65 years and older*

### **FALSE**

### **TRUE**

The shot can give you the flu.

- Flu (influenza) vaccines recommended for adults 65 years and older are made from inactivated—or killed—influenza viruses.
- Inactivated viruses cannot give you the flu.
- After you receive a flu shot, it takes two weeks to be protected against the flu. If you are exposed to the flu during the two weeks immediately after receiving your flu shot, you may still get the flu.

The flu is just like a bad cold.

- The flu is far more dangerous than a bad cold. It's a disease of the lungs and can lead to pneumonia.
- Each year, anywhere from 3,000 to 49,000 people die in the U.S because of the flu (depending on how bad flu season is).
- Most people who die are 65 years and older.
- People older than 65 are at higher risk of developing serious flu-related complications.

Even if I get a flu shot, I can still get the flu.

- Although there's a chance you can still get the flu, the flu shot usually protects most people from the flu.
- The flu shot will not protect you from other viruses that feel like the flu.



## FALSE

## TRUE

The side effects from the shot are worse than the flu.

- A sore arm is probably the worst side effect you'll have.
- You're more likely to develop serious complications from the flu than have a bad reaction to the shot.

The vaccine isn't 100 percent effective, so I'm better off getting the flu.

- Getting a flu shot lowers your chance of having the flu and spreading it to your loved ones and friends.
- If you get a flu shot and still get the flu, you may not be as sick as you would have been without the shot.
- No vaccine is 100 percent effective.

Only the very old and sick need flu shots.

- Healthy adults and children need flu shots to stay well.
- If you are sick and have a high fever, check with your health care provider before getting a flu shot.

December is too late to get a flu shot.

- The flu shot can be given before or during flu season, which can begin as early as October and last as late as May.
- Getting a flu shot in December—or even later—will still protect you against the flu.
- The best time to get a flu shot is October or earlier if the flu vaccine is available in your area.

Some people are allergic to the flu vaccine.

- Severe allergic reactions to the flu vaccine are very rare and usually happen within a few hours of getting the shot.
- If you have a severe allergy to eggs or if you have had a severe reaction to the flu vaccine in the past, check with your health care provider before getting a flu shot.

**Getting immunized is a lifelong, life-protecting job.**

**Talk to your health care provider about the vaccinations you need.**