According to the Centers for Disease Control and prevention (CDC), more people die each year from the flu and resulting complications than from all other vaccine-preventable diseases combined. Flu symptoms, including fever, headaches, cough, sore throat, nasal congestion, extreme tiredness and body aches, can disrupt your work, school and social life for up to two weeks.

Myth #1: “The flu is just like a cold...”
FACT: While some symptoms of the flu – such as nasal congestion, cough and sore throat- may mimic cold symptoms, the flu is highly contagious and can easily be passed from a low-risk individual to a high-risk individual, which can then lead to serious complications, including pneumonia and worsening of chronic conditions.

Myth #2: “It won’t happen to me...”
FACT: Influenza is a contagious respiratory disease that can cause mild to severe illness. The best way to help stop the spread of flu is to prevent getting the flu yourself. Getting a flu vaccine each year protects you and those you love.

Myth #3: “The flu vaccine is only necessary for the old and very young...”
FACT: The flu vaccine is for anyone who doesn’t want to be sick with the flu or inadvertently spread the virus to others. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for the CDC recommends annual immunization for all people aged 6 months and older.

Myth #4: “I exercise regularly and eat healthy so I don’t need to get vaccinated...”
The flu virus can spread when a sick person coughs, sneezes or talks, and can also be transmitted on surfaces that are touched by both sick and healthy people. Even healthy people can be infected with the flu virus without showing any symptoms and unknowingly infect others.

Myth #5: “I got the vaccine and still got the flu so it must not be effective...”
FACT: The vaccine prevents the flu in approximately 70-90 percent of healthy people under the age of 65. The effectiveness of the vaccine is subject to variables such as the amount of time between vaccination and exposure to the virus, age and health status, and the match between the virus strains in the vaccine and those in circulation.
Myth #6: “If I get the vaccine, it might give me the flu...”
FACT: A flu shot will not give you the flu. The viral strains in injectable influenza vaccine have been inactivated, making it biologically unable to cause illness. The viral strains in the nasal-spray vaccine are weakened and do not cause severe symptoms often associated with influenza illness.

Myth #7: “Last year I got vaccinated so I don’t need to this year...”
FACT: Because influenza strains typically change each year, you cannot count on last year’s vaccine to protect you this year. Considering up to 20 percent of the U.S. population still contracts influenza every year, getting a flu vaccination makes good health sense.

Myth #8: “I’m better off taking my chances...”
FACT: Unfortunately, getting the flu means also becoming a carrier. Since the flu is highly contagious, with symptoms starting one to four days after the virus enters the body, even the most conscientious individuals may unknowingly spread the virus.

Myth #9: “I’m too late...”
FACT: While September, October and November are the recommended months for vaccination, getting a flu vaccination later in the season (December-March) can still protect you as flu season often peaks after January.

Myth #10: “I never get the flu...”
FACT: Influenza strains change every year, which means that even if you had a natural immunity to previous strains, your immunity may not protect you from newly circulating strains. A new flu vaccine is formulated each year to match and protect against the strains of the flu virus that research indicates will be the most common for the coming season. It’s clear: Getting vaccinated each year protects you and those you love.

Myth #11: “If I’m pregnant, the vaccine won’t protect me or my baby...”
FACT: Getting a flu shot has been shown to protect both mother and baby from the flu. Since pregnant women experience changes to their body that may affect their immune system, lungs and heart, they are especially susceptible to illness from the flu.

The real fact is, the flu is preventable.
So, please get vaccinated!