

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wayne Holmes Emergency Coalition

Janet Horst

Longbrake Wellness Center, College of Wooster

570 E. Wayne Avenue

Wooster, OH 44691

Take the “Flu Vaccine Myths” Quiz

... Check your knowledge!

1. The vaccine for H1N1 is included in this year’s flu shot.

True. The 2010-2011 vaccine provides protection against A/H1N1 (pandemic) influenza and two other influenza viruses – influenza A/H3N2 and influenza B.

2. The “flu” is like a “bad cold.”

False. The flu is caused by the influenza virus which is different from other viruses that cause common colds and other illnesses.

3. “Stomach flu” is a type of flu.

False. Influenza is a respiratory virus and is not the same virus that causes gastrointestinal symptoms.

4. I’ve never had the flu, so I don’t need a shot.

False. Twenty percent of the population contract influenza every year.

5. Flu shots don’t work.

False. Flu shots do protect you from current strains of influenza predicted for your geographic area.

6. It is possible to catch the flu from a flu shot.

False. The flu injection is a “dead” virus that helps you develop immunity from influenza and can **NOT** give you the flu.

7. The flu vaccine is for older adults and people with certain health conditions.

False. **EVERYONE** over the age of six months is encouraged to get an annual influenza vaccine.

8. I got the flu vaccine last year, so I don’t need to get it this year.

False. Flu vaccine immunity lasts about a year and gradually decreases. Flu viruses change continually, and each year’s vaccine is formulated to include the currently circulating flu virus strains.

9. I am protected from the flu immediately after I get the flu vaccine.

False. Even though your body starts to protect you from the flu as soon as you receive the vaccine, it takes two weeks to achieve maximum immunity.

10. If I stay away from people who have the flu, I won't get it.

False. Influenza is highly contagious, is spread by droplets in the air (sneezing and coughing) and by flu virus left on doorknobs, keyboards, etc. Persons with the flu are contagious before they are aware they are getting ill...so it is not possible to avoid exposure to influenza.

11. Getting the flu vaccine after October or November is too late.

False. Even though influenza in the U.S. is most common from October to April, it is never too late to get an influenza vaccine.

12. There is no way to diagnose the flu.

False. The flu can be diagnosed on symptoms and a physical exam. The flu can also be cultured from swabs of nasal passages or throat.

13. The flu shot causes bad side effects.

False. The flu vaccine can cause a sore arm and mild flu-like symptoms (muscle aches, slight fever) for one to two days, and is the body's immune system responding to and building protection against influenza.

14. The flu usually lasts for 2-3 days.

False. Influenza symptoms typically last for up to two weeks.

15. The flu virus is passed to another person when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

True! Since the influenza virus is expelled into the air when an infected person sneezes or coughs, it is not possible to avoid being exposed to it. The best protection is to receive an annual influenza vaccine.

16. Not everyone can take the flu shot.

True! People with severe allergy to eggs or vaccine components, previous serious reaction to the flu vaccine, or history of developing Guillan-Barre syndrome from a vaccine should not receive a flu vaccine.

17. Since the flu is a virus, there is no treatment for it.

False. Anti-viral medications are available which reduce the severity of symptoms and/or reduce the length of influenza illness. They are only effective if taken within 72 hours of becoming ill with influenza, and are most effective if taken within 24-48 hours of becoming ill.

18. The flu is not that serious.

False. There are 30,000-40,000 influenza-related deaths each year in the U.S. Flu is the seventh leading cause of death in the U.S.

If you would like to submit questions or make topic suggestions, please go to our website at www.whcc.org.