EIGHT BAD EXCUSES FOR NOT GETTING A FLU SHOT

1. I’m young and healthy!

Even if you’re healthy, the flu can still cause serious complications. Further, you can pass the virus on to others who may not be as healthy as you are.

2. I heard that the flu shot isn’t 100% effective.

If there was a safe shot that had a 60% chance of preventing you from getting cancer, would you get the shot? How about if it would also protect the people around you? Even if you still get the flu, it will likely be milder than if you hadn’t been vaccinated.

3. I was vaccinated last year.

That’s great! But you still need to get a new shot this year — flu viruses change from year to year, so go get your update.

4. I got the shot last year and felt sick afterwards.

There are two possible explanations for this. First, you might feel a little run down after getting vaccinated because your immune system is doing its job and building antibodies against the virus. The real flu would be far worse. Secondly, you might have been infected by another respiratory virus soon after getting your vaccination; the vaccination won’t protect you from other viruses, but those viruses are also unlikely to cause severe complications.

5. It’s already January and I haven’t gotten my vaccine yet.

It’s not too late to get vaccinated! Although it’s best to be vaccinated in the fall, even a January or February vaccine will help protect you against late-season flu.

6. I’m worried about vaccine safety.

Vaccine manufacturers conduct extensive safety screens, and health agencies around the world track vaccine side effects, which are fortunately very rare.

7. What about Guillain-Barré syndrome?

Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) is a rare nervous system disorder that occasionally develops after infections. There was a potential link between the 1976 swine flu vaccine and GBS in 1976 (an excess of 1/100,000 GBS cases) but there has been no link since then with flu shots.

8. Don’t the shots contain thimerosal?

Although some people worry that thimerosal (an antiseptic and antifungal used as a vaccine preservative) causes autism and other side effects, there is very good scientific evidence that there is NO ASSOCIATION between them. Also, flu shots without thimerosal are available.