

Flu Vaccines: Facts & Conversations

An Autism-Informed Guide for Families, Providers, and Community Members



Why the Flu Vaccine Matters

- The flu can cause serious illness, —especially for people with disabilities and chronic conditions. The flu vaccine is a safe, effective, and updated yearly to match common strains. Autistic individuals—especially those with other health conditions—may be more vulnerable to complications from the flu.
- Vaccination protects those who can't get the vaccine, like people with medical contraindications.

Common Myths & Facts

MYTH	FACT
The flu shot gives you the flu.	The vaccine uses inactivated virus—it cannot cause the flu.
Flu shots don't work.	They reduce severity and lower hospitalization risks.
Healthy people don't need it.	They reduce severity and lower hospitalization risks.
Vaccines harm Autistic people.	Research confirms flu vaccines are safe for Autistic individuals.

How to Talk About the Flu Vaccine

Conversations about vaccines work best when they are respectful, accessible, and person-centered.



For Providers

- Ask permission “Would you like to hear about the flu shot?”
Use plain language and visuals, avoid jargon.
- Address sensory needs: Offer numbing spray, quiet spaces, or preferred arms.



For Families and Caregivers

- Prepare with visual schedules or social stories.
- Bring sensory tools (ex. headphones, fidgets, or comfort item) to appointments.



Confidence-Building Tips

- “The flu shot helps your body fight off like armor.”
- “You may feel a pinch or your arm may be sore—but that means it’s working.”
- “You can still get the flu after the vaccine, but it’s usually much less serious.”
- “Getting vaccinated helps protect other people, too—like babies, grandparents, and people who are sick.”



Additional Support

For more Autism-informed tools and vaccine confidence resources, visit: autismsociety.org/vei

[Making Vaccination Sites Accessible for People with Disabilities and Older Adults](#)

If you’d like help preparing for a vaccine appointment or finding an accessible clinic, contact the Autism Society National Helpline at **800-3-AUTISM**.