I heard the flu shot can give you the flu.
- Flu vaccines are made with killed or weakened viruses that cannot give you the flu.
- Sometimes the body's immune response after vaccination can make some people feel a little ill, and that's normal. For example, some kids may get a slight fever, but that's their body responding and building antibodies to protect them from the flu.

My child got vaccinated in the past and still got sick.
- Many other viruses cause symptoms similar to flu—your child might have caught one of them.
- Flu vaccine takes 2 weeks to work. Your child may have been infected with flu or another virus before developing immunity.
- Flu vaccines are not 100% effective. However, even if your child catches the flu, the illness will likely be less severe.

Flu vaccine is not effective. Why bother?
- Flu is very serious and can cause pneumonia, hospitalization, and death.
- If your child catches flu and COVID-19 at the same time, this can cause serious health complications.
- Getting flu and COVID shots (for those who are eligible) is the best way to keep your child safe and healthy during the pandemic.
- For children who are eligible for COVID-19 vaccine, they can get flu and COVID-19 vaccines at the same visit.
- Without the flu vaccine, your child has zero added protection if he/she gets exposed. It's not worth the risk. Healthy children who were vaccinated lowered their chance of dying from flu by 65%. That's pretty remarkable.

My child is healthy and doesn't need a flu shot.
- Flu viruses change from year to year.
- Every year, healthy kids who have never caught the flu before, suddenly get it.
- With schools, after-school programs, and recreational centers reopening, getting a flu vaccine is important for your child.
- Flu can spread easily at school, while playing with friends, or being out in the community.
- I am healthy and got my flu shot. I also immunized my kids, and as your doctor/nurse, I want your family to also be protected.
- Scarlet died from flu complications at age 5; to her mother’s regret, she was not vaccinated. Watch Scarlet’s Story and share with clinic staff and parents.

I’m concerned about side effects.
- Vaccines, like any medication, can cause side effects. With flu shots most effects are mild, primarily pain or redness in the arm.
- Any mild side effects should go away quickly. If you have any concerns after getting vaccinated, please call us.

I don’t want vaccines with thimerosal/mercury
- For kids under 3: you’ll be getting the vaccine without any thimerosal. Flu vaccine with or without thimerosal is safe and effective.
- Most flu vaccine is thimerosal-free.
- Only multi-dose vials contain thimerosal. The thimerosal is used to prevent the growth of bacteria in the vaccine.
- If parents are still concerned, you can show this 3 minute video: Is there Mercury in Vaccines? by the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.

The flu is just like a bad cold—it’s not serious.
- Flu is sometimes confused with a cold, but flu is much more serious. When a person catches the flu, they often have a fever and body aches; they may have to miss days of work or school. Flu can even be life-threatening. While babies, pregnant women, those with certain health conditions, and seniors are at highest risk for flu complications or death, even healthy children can die from flu.
- In the 2019-2020 flu season, influenza sent up to 740,000 people to the hospital with flu complications and caused an estimated 62,000 deaths in the United States.

My child is afraid of needles.
- If available, and the child is eligible, offer the LAIV (nasa spray) flu vaccine.
- Let younger children sit in their parents’ laps; practice distraction techniques. Suggest the parent bring a favorite snack, book or toy for comfort.
- Allow an older child to listen to music and ask them to take deep breaths.
- Reassure the parent and their child so they keep calm, and be honest about the pinch.
- Be supportive and offer praise. You can say: “I know you seemed worried about your visit today, but you did it! I’m so proud of you for being so brave! Maybe it will even get a little easier next time.”

Tips for Speaking with Parents about Flu Vaccine
How to Address Common Concerns

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