

## **What is a vaccine?**

A substance that typically contains an inactivated or weakened form of a disease-causing agent. Introducing it to our bodies allows our immune system to recognize it and develop a response, so that when we encounter the disease-causing agent in its full strength, that we are able to fight it off quickly and easily.

## **There are a lot of misconceptions about vaccines. True/False:**

### **1. Vaccines are unnatural.**

False. Your immune system produces immunity following vaccination the same as it would following “natural” infection with a disease. The difference is that you don’t have to get sick first.

### **2. There is a link between vaccines and autism.**

False. In 1998 there was a study that showed a link between vaccines and autism, but further investigation found that there were many errors in the study. The lead researcher got his medical license revoked, and many studies since then have confirmed that there is no link between vaccines and autism.

### **3. A flu vaccine can give you the flu.**

False. The flu vaccine can’t give you the flu. Some may develop flu-like symptoms for a variety of reasons including:

Reaction to vaccine: some people experience cold symptoms for a day or two after receiving vaccine. However, it is not nearly as severe as the flu itself.

Two-week window: takes about 2 weeks for flu shot to take full effect. If you’re exposed to the influenza virus before the vaccine is fully effective, you may catch the flu.

### **4. Getting a flu vaccine in January or later is too late.**

False. You can get it anytime! The CDC recommends that people get vaccinated as soon as it becomes available (in the Fall) and continues into December, January and beyond. Flu activity usually peaks in February most years, but disease can occur as late as May.

### **5. Flu viruses change constantly which requires a new flu vaccine to be produced each year.**

True. Flu viruses change constantly which requires a new flu vaccine to be produced each year.