

# Flu Shots

## Pre-Reading

### A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Do you get a flu shot every year?
2. Does your doctor recommend the flu shot?
3. Do you think it's important for children and the elderly to be vaccinated for the flu?
4. What risks are associated with flu shots?



### B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.  
Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. influenza                   | a) to allow the immune system to fight a disease on its own |
| ___ 2. vaccine                     | b) to relate, to connect                                    |
| ___ 3. risk                        | c) the medical term for "flu"                               |
| ___ 4. associate                   | d) a possible problem                                       |
| ___ 5. allergic                    | e) a bodily change caused by taking medicine                |
| ___ 6. side effect                 | f) producing a negative reaction in the body                |
| ___ 7. mutate                      | g) to demand, to not accept "no"                            |
| ___ 8. preventative                | h) to stop something negative from happening                |
| ___ 9. immune system               | i) to change forms  |
| ___ 10. insist                     | j) a substance given to a person to prevent a disease       |
| ___ 11. outweigh                   | k) to be more important than something else                 |
| ___ 12. let nature take its course | l) the body's natural defense against disease               |

# Reading

## FLU SHOTS

*Weighing the risks*

1. **Influenza** is the long word for “flu.” The flu makes it difficult for the body to fight off other illnesses. Some doctors think everyone should get an annual flu **vaccine**.
2. There are some **risks associated** with flu shots. People who are **allergic** to eggs or chicken can get sick from flu vaccines. Injecting a foreign substance into the body can also have **side effects**. The flu shot doesn’t always work, either. This is because the influenza virus **mutates**.
3. There are other **preventative** measures besides getting flu shots. Frequent handwashing is one. Staying home from work or school greatly reduces the spread of flu. Do you stay in bed when you’re sick?
4. Some people never seem to get sick. Perhaps they are born with stronger **immune systems**. Or maybe they are positive people who believe in healthy lifestyles.
5. Doctors **insist** that people in certain groups get vaccinated for influenza. Young children and the elderly are more likely to die from flu-related illnesses. In these cases, the benefits of the flu shot **outweigh** the risks. Healthy people may prefer to **let nature take its course**.

### Could it be the flu?

#### FLU SYMPTOMS

- cough
- fever
- runny nose
- sore throat
- body aches
- fatigue

# Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs, and write the answers in your notebook.

1. According to some doctors, how often do people need the flu vaccine?
2. Who should not get a flu vaccine?
3. Why doesn’t the flu vaccine always prevent influenza?
4. What is mentioned as a more natural way of preventing the spread of flu?
5. Who needs the flu vaccine the most?

## Vocabulary Review

### A. Complete the Sentences

Complete the sentences using vocabulary from page 1.  
You may need to change the word forms.

1. People who are \_\_\_\_\_ to animals have difficulty keeping pets.
2. If you want a strong \_\_\_\_\_, make sure to get enough sleep.
3. My doctor \_\_\_\_\_ that I start eating healthier.
4. You could take a pill to help fight the infection, or you could \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Flu bugs are \_\_\_\_\_ with cold weather.
6. A \_\_\_\_\_ measure is to cover your mouth with your elbow.
7. One of the possible \_\_\_\_\_ of the medicine is muscle weakness.

### B. Choose the Correct Word

Choose the word with the closest meaning to the underlined word or phrase in the following sentences.

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p>1. The virus <u>mutated</u>, so a new vaccine was created.</p> <p>a) prevented<br/>b) changed<br/>c) stopped<br/>d) died</p>                              | <p>3. There is a season each year when a lot of people get the <u>influenza</u> virus.</p> <p>a) bird<br/>b) stomach<br/>c) flu<br/>d) sick</p> | <p>5. There is a higher <u>risk</u> of catching the flu when you travel to certain foreign countries.</p> <p>a) system<br/>b) danger<br/>c) version<br/>d) place</p> |
| <p>2. The benefits of having a family doctor <u>outweigh</u> the challenges of finding one.</p> <p>a) worsen<br/>b) offset<br/>c) require<br/>d) include</p> | <p>4. There is a <u>vaccine</u> you can get to prevent chicken pox.</p> <p>a) shot<br/>b) pill<br/>c) book<br/>d) instructions</p>              |  |

## Discussion

1. Do you trust your doctor to make important decisions about your health, such as whether or not to get a shot?
2. Is the world too worried about the spreading of disease?
3. Do you get sick often? Why do you think you are healthier (or less healthy) than your friends or family members?
4. Do you worry about flu pandemics such as bird flu or swine flu? Why or why not?

## Class Opinion

Walk around the class and ask your classmates questions. Write their answers in the chart below.

Classmate's name:	Does your country offer free flu shots?	Do you (or would you) get the flu shot every year?	Do you stay home from school, work, and social events when you are sick?

## Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

### FLU SHOTS

*Weighing the risks*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ is the long word for “flu.” The flu makes it difficult for the body to fight off other illnesses. Some doctors think everyone should get an annual flu \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. There are some \_\_\_\_\_ associated with flu shots. People who are \_\_\_\_\_ to eggs or chicken can get sick from flu vaccines. Injecting a foreign substance into the body can also have \_\_\_\_\_. The flu shot doesn’t always work, either. This is because the influenza virus mutates.
3. There are other \_\_\_\_\_ measures besides getting flu shots. Frequent handwashing is one. Staying home from work or school greatly reduces the spread of flu. Do you stay in bed when you’re sick?
4. Some people never seem to get sick. Perhaps they are born with stronger \_\_\_\_\_. Or maybe they are positive people who believe in healthy lifestyles.
5. Doctors \_\_\_\_\_ that people in certain groups get vaccinated for influenza. Young children and the elderly are more likely to die from flu-related illnesses. In these cases, the benefits of the flu shot \_\_\_\_\_ the risks. Healthy people may prefer to let nature take its \_\_\_\_\_ .

## Answer Key

### LESSON DESCRIPTION:

Students read about flu shots and why they are controversial. They learn and practice new vocabulary and discuss health issues.

### TEACHING TIPS:

See *Discussion Starters Teaching Guide* (<https://esllibrary.com/courses/72/lessons/>) for a variety of ways to use the reading.

**LEVEL:** Int

**TIME:** 1.5–2 hours

**TAGS:** flu, flu shots, flu shot, influenza, vaccine, vaccines, vaccination, health

### Pre-Reading

#### A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Have students work in small groups or as a class.

#### B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- |      |      |      |      |       |       |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. c | 3. d | 5. f | 7. i | 9. l  | 11. k |
| 2. j | 4. b | 6. e | 8. h | 10. g | 12. a |

### Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. Go over the flu symptoms in the box. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 5. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

### Comprehension

- Some doctors think people should get the flu vaccine every year.
- People who have an allergy to chicken or eggs should not get the vaccine.
- The flu virus is always changing, so the vaccine doesn't always work.
- Two natural ways of preventing the spread of flu are washing your hands and staying home when you are sick.
- Young children and the elderly are more at risk of dying from flu-related illnesses.

### Vocabulary Review

#### A. COMPLETE THE SENTENCES

- |                               |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. allergic                   | 5. associated   |
| 2. immune system              | 6. preventative |
| 3. insists                    | 7. side effects |
| 4. let nature take its course |                 |

#### B. CHOOSE THE CORRECT WORD

- |      |      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. b | 2. b | 3. c | 4. a | 5. b |
|------|------|------|------|------|

### Discussion

Answers will vary.

Can be done individually or in small groups or pairs.

### Class Opinion

Have students walk around the class and ask their classmates questions. They should record their answers in the chart.

### Listening

- Influenza, vaccine
- risks, allergic, side effects
- preventative
- immune systems
- insist, outweigh, course