



## 6 Flu Myths You Shouldn't Believe

### DON'T MISS OUT ON YOUR BEST PROTECTION FROM THE FLU

Don't think you need a flu shot, or worried you'll get sick from it? Consider this: Only 5% of people wash their hands enough to kill germs, according to a study in the *Journal of Environmental Health*. On top of that, 10% of people skip washing their hands altogether. Keep reading to clear up any flu shot confusion.

#### MYTH 1: ONLY BABIES AND OLDER ADULTS NEED A FLU SHOT

Actually, everyone 6 months and older should get a flu shot, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It's especially important for young children, older adults, and those with certain medical conditions, but they are safer when those around them aren't sick. "If you're going to be around people who are at a high risk for complications, you don't want to be the one to pass the flu to them," says Kisha Davis, M.D., medical director of the Casey Health Institute in Gaithersburg, MD.

#### MYTH 2: YOU CAN GET THE FLU FROM A FLU SHOT

The truth is, you can't get the flu from a flu shot. But you might feel some flu-like symptoms after getting the shot. "Your body has to respond to the vaccine," Dr. Davis says. "So you might have some side effects that mimic the flu, such as runny nose, fever, aches." These side effects usually last 1 to 2 days. If you're concerned about side effects, talk with your doctor.



It takes two weeks for the vaccine to be effective, so get the flu shot as soon as it is available.

#### MYTH 3: YOU SHOULDN'T GET A FLU SHOT TOO EARLY

"It takes 2 weeks for the vaccine to be effective," Dr. Davis says. You'll get the most benefit if you get a flu shot as soon as they're available, since flu cases can pop up as early as October.

#### MYTH 4: IT'S TOO LATE TO GET A FLU SHOT IN JANUARY

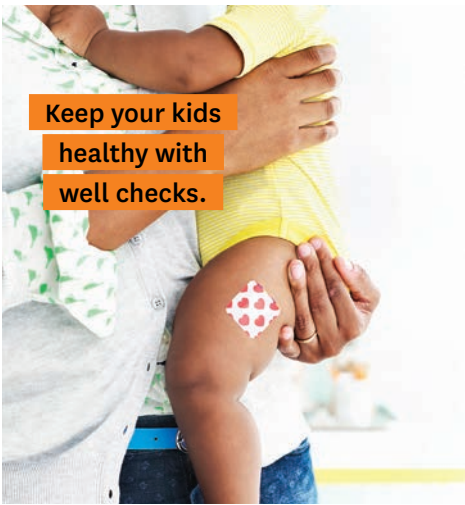
Flu season peaks in January and February, but flu cases can occur as late as March or April. It's best to get a flu shot in the fall, but you may still benefit from getting one later, Dr. Davis says.

#### MYTH 5: A FLU SHOT ONLY PROTECTS YOU FROM CERTAIN STRAINS, SO THERE'S NO POINT

Research shows that even if the strains included in a particular flu vaccine aren't a perfect match, it can still provide some protection against the circulating virus.

#### MYTH 6: CHILDREN WITH EGG ALLERGIES CAN'T GET A FLU SHOT

All children should get a flu shot. The CDC recommends that children with allergies get their flu shot from their primary care doctor or allergist to best manage any allergic reactions to the shot.



# HealthCheck Protects Your Children with Preventive Care

THE BEST TIME TO SCHEDULE YOUR CHILD’S DOCTOR’S APPOINTMENT IS BEFORE THEY GET SICK

HealthCheck is a preventive health program for kids under age 21. These checkups are very important for your child’s health. Your child may look and feel well, yet may have a health problem. Your doctor wants to see your children for regular checkups, not just when they’re sick.

The yearly HealthCheck checkup includes:

- a health history
- physical exam
- developmental assessment
- hearing and vision screening
- blood and urine lab tests
- complete immunizations (shots)

## FOLLOW THIS IMMUNIZATION SCHEDULE TO KEEP YOUR CHILD ON TRACK

BIRTH	1 MONTH	2 MONTHS	4 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS	15 MONTHS	18 MONTHS	19-23 MONTHS	2-3 YEARS	4-6 YEARS
HEP B	HEP B			HEP B						
		RV	RV	RV						
		DTAP	DTAP	DTaP		DTaP				DTaP
		HIB	HIB	HIB	HiB					
		PCV	PVC	PCV	PCV					
		IPV	IPV	IPV	IPV					IPV
				INFLUENZA EVERY YEAR						
					MMR					MMR
					VZV					VZV
					HEP A					

HEP B = Hepatitis B, RV = Rotavirus, DTaP = Diphtheria Tetanus Pertussis, HiB = Haemophilus Influenza Type B, PCV = Pneumonia, IPV = Polio, MMR = Measles Mumps Rubella, VZV = Varicella, HEP A = Hepatitis A

## PROTECT YOUR KIDS FROM HEAD TO TOE

Flu shots and vaccines are one of the best gifts you can give to those you love to protect their health. A nutritious diet is another important part of keeping kids healthy, but getting a flu shot can sometimes feel easier than getting picky kids to eat! Try our ideas to help, and even get your kids involved in the kitchen. If you have questions about your plan, visit our website [mhswi.com](https://mhswi.com), or call us at 888-713-6180.

Ken Schellhase, MD, MPH  
Chief Medical Officer, MHS Health Wisconsin



**Provider Network**  
If you’re looking for care and need to find a provider, look on our website, [mhswi.com](https://mhswi.com), in the Find a Doctor section. Don’t have internet access or need a paper copy? No problem! Please call us at 888-713-6180. We are happy to send you one in the mail.



# Baby Your Baby’s Skin

HOW TO GIVE THE RIGHT TLC RIGHT FROM THE START

Taking care of infant skin early on leads to healthier skin when your baby is no longer a baby. So how can you care for that tender skin and protect it from the harsh winter elements? Jenna Streicher, M.D., a pediatric dermatologist at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, suggests these skin tips for your baby.

### CONSERVE BODY HEAT

Babies lose heat more quickly than adults do, so it’s important to help them regulate their body temperature.

“Use several layers, and put an extra layer of clothing on babies that you wouldn’t necessarily wear as an adult,” Dr. Streicher says. “But don’t over-bundle. If your baby’s belly or back feel too warm or sweaty, remove a layer.” A hat, mittens, and socks are baby essentials when it’s cold. And don’t forget about their noses!

Snowsuits are great for skiing, but not as great for a car seat. Baby can overheat, and snowsuits also make seatbelts more difficult. “Use blankets to keep your baby warm. It’s difficult to secure a harness tightly around thick clothing,” she says.

Photos: Getty Images

### MOISTURIZE FOR SOFTNESS

Biting winds, frigid temps, and central heating can really dry a baby’s skin. “Ointments are more effective than lotions or creams in the wintertime,” says Dr. Streicher. “Ointments tend to come in tubs or tubes, versus lotions that are often in pump bottles.” Look for products that have a higher proportion of emollient than water, and save lighter, water-based products for summertime.

### BATHE BETTER

There’s no set rule about how much or little to bathe babies. For safety, use warm water (not hot) that’s approximately 100 degrees, and only fill the tub with about 2 inches of water (or to the baby’s hips). A bath of only five to 10 minutes helps prevent drying out the skin.

“Babies really only need bathing two to three times per week, but some parents enjoy bathing as part of an evening routine and for bonding purposes,” she says. “Especially in wintertime, it’s important that if you bathe your baby more often, that you apply moisturizer immediately after the bath.”

## BEWARE THESE SKIN CONDITIONS

Babies can develop a variety of skin problems, says Dr. Streicher. The most common are:

**Eczema:** Also known as atopic dermatitis, eczema is a chronic, itchy skin condition. It can often first appear or significantly worsen in winter when skin gets dry. That can lead to more itching and the skin may even crack open, she says.

**Diaper rash:** “The diaper area should be kept clean and dry,” she says. “Make sure you don’t excessively scrub or rub the area, because that can irritate it more. Gently clean the area with water or wipes that are specifically designed for babies and then slather on diaper paste in a thick layer.”

**Sunburn:** Yes, it can happen in the winter, even to the littlest children, especially if they’re outside in the warm sun as it reflects off of sparkling snow. For babies less than six months of age, the best options are sun protection from clothing and avoiding direct sun. In babies six months of age or older, it is also safe to use sunscreen on exposed areas.





# Find the Cure for Picky Eating

ARE MEALTIMES A BATTLEFIELD? FIVE SIMPLE STRATEGIES TO MAKE DINNER FUN (AND HEALTHY) AGAIN

Don’t worry. Your child won’t go to college eating only chicken nuggets and buttered noodles. Actually, they might. But that’s okay. What’s most important is helping them develop a healthy eating attitude, and to make sure nutrition makes it into their diet in some way.

**PICKY IS PRETTY COMMON.** A Duke University study found that more than 20 percent of kids between ages of two and six are “selective eaters.” Most are moderately picky, researchers say. But a few are super-fussy eaters who are so particular that it limits their ability to go to play dates, birthday parties, and family events.

**RELAX.** “Getting stressed out about your child’s eating can just make things worse,” says Jenny McGlothlin, a language and feeding specialist at the University of Texas and author of *Helping Your Child with Extreme Picky Eating*. Kids tap into your anxiety, which sets them up for a difficult relationship with food. “Their brain learns eating isn’t fun, it’s uncomfortable,” she explains. “So try to stay calm and worry less about the green beans and more about the attitude. If kids have butterflies in their stomach, there’s no room for food.”

**EAT AS A FAMILY.** Don’t worry—that doesn’t mean you need to create a Norman Rockwell scene. It just means your child and one trusted adult enjoying a meal together. “It’s important to sit down with the kids while they eat,” says McGlothlin. “Children learn to eat the foods they see being eaten by adults. They take cues from them. They trust their parents, so they’re more likely to trust the food they’re eating. The social piece is a big deal.”

**DON’T SERVE YOUR CHILD.** “Beginning at about age two, kids can start serving themselves family style or buffet style,” says McGlothlin. “That bowl on the table



Try to worry less about the green beans on the plate and focus on a great attitude about meals.

puts them in control and makes them more willing to try new things.” McGlothlin reports that taking this approach cuts battles down dramatically. “That sense of control sets them up for enjoying food in the long run.”

**SERVE DESSERT WITH DINNER.** Think that’s a recipe for disaster? Think again. If you’re sure your kid won’t eat anything else but a brownie or a dish of ice cream, McGlothlin insists the opposite tends to happen with this strategy. “Kids take a little taste of the cookie, then a bite of noodles or a piece of broccoli. It puts all the food on the same playing field and doesn’t set the dessert up as a reward.”

**INCLUDE YOUR CHILD’S FAVORITES ON THE MENU.** Serving mom’s homemade chicken dish? Great! Put a small serving bowl of chicken nuggets on the table too, as a side dish. “That takes the pressure off,” says McGlothlin. “You just might find your child having a couple of nuggets and trying a little of mom’s baked chicken, too.”

## Tell Us How We Are Doing

Every year, we use a survey to ask our members how we’re doing. If you filled out the survey, thank you! The chart below shows some key results.

Please take the time to answer surveys about us. Your input shows us where we are doing well. It also shows us where we need to improve.

POSITIVE RESULTS	SCORE
Customer Service	91%
Getting Needed Care	87%
AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT	SCORE
Rating of Specialists	82%
Rating of Health Plan	80%

# Kale and Chickpea Stew

A HEARTY AND FLAVORFUL DISH THAT’S BEST SERVED WHEN TEMPERATURES ARE COLD

**SERVINGS: 4-6**  
**Prep time:** 5 min  
**Cook Time:** 30 min  
**Per serving:** 227 calories, 5.4 g fat, 0.7 g saturated fat, 554 mg sodium, 36.6 g carbs, 10 g protein, 807 mg potassium

- INGREDIENTS**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
  - 1 onion, chopped
  - 2 garlic cloves, minced
  - 1 teaspoon ras el hanout (optional)
  - 1 large russet potato, cubed and peeled
  - 1 large bunch fresh kale stems trimmed, washed and dried
  - 2 no-salt chickpeas (15-ounce), drained and rinsed
  - 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth

- DIRECTIONS**
1. In a large pot over medium heat, combine the olive oil, onion, and garlic. Cook until the onion has started to soften but not brown, about five to eight minutes. Add the ras el hanout, if using, and stir to combine.
  2. Add the potato, kale, and chickpeas, and stir until evenly coated with the oil mixture. Add the chicken broth or water; bring to a simmer and cook, partially covered, until the potatoes are tender, about 20 minutes. Ladle into bowls and serve with crusty whole-grain bread.



## COOK IT TOGETHER

## Fruit Kebabs Make Food Fun

Make these with your kids to show picky eaters that food is fun to make—and eat.

**Servings:** 6  
**Prep time:** 10 minutes  
**Cook time:** 40 minutes

- INGREDIENTS**
- 20 grapes, red and green
  - 1 kiwi, cubed
  - 1 cup melon, cubed
  - 1 orange
  - 6 wooden or plastic skewers

- DIRECTIONS**
1. Peel and cut the fruit into small chunks and place in a bowl. (Older kids can help with this step—use a child-friendly knife.) And if you have other fruit in your fridge, like blueberries or apples, throw them into the mix, too.
  2. Let the kids skewer the fruit—encourage them to be creative, varying the colors and textures. Place completed skewers on a platter.

Add a little pizzazz—drizzle a little chocolate syrup on the platter. Or, make a super simple, protein-rich dip with plain Greek yogurt. Add a teaspoon of vanilla extract or a bit of strawberry jam.



# Keep Your Mood Bright, Even on Darker Days

HOW TO OUTSMART SEASONAL MOOD CHANGES



As days get shorter, you may get the “winter blues,” especially if you’re prone to seasonal affective disorder (SAD). The condition affects about 10 million Americans. These seasonal mood changes can be even harder when you also have to manage chronic health conditions such as asthma, heart disease, or diabetes. Take charge with these suggestions from Seattle-based psychologist Samantha Slaughter.

## PLAN AHEAD

If you know that earlier sunsets make you blue, make a plan before they happen. Depression can make it harder to manage your chronic health condition, or make symptoms worse. Put uplifting activities

(like reading, visiting with friends, or seeing a mental health professional) on your calendar before the bad feelings set in.

## STICK TO IT

Keep to your routines as much as possible. If you like walking or running during summer, adapt by walking indoors at a mall or carrying affordable LED night-lights outside. You can also work out right at home. There are plenty of free workouts, including yoga and strength training, available online or on DVDs at the library.

## DO THE OPPOSITE

If you want to nap, vacuum the house or take a wake-up shower instead. This

disrupts your original thought pattern, and keeps you going rather than slowing you down.

## BE YOURSELF

If you wake up feeling crummy because your health is not at its best, give yourself time and space to feel your emotions. Limit comparisons to other people by accepting yourself and the impact of your condition.

## STAY CONNECTED

That means getting out and being with friends for social support. Find an exercise buddy to keep motivated. Join a church or community group, or make the investment to join a gym or sports club.

## BE AWARE

Maybe you’ve been generally upbeat, but now that it’s winter, you’re not. You’re less motivated, not sleeping, feeling tired and indecisive, and your pain is worse. If you’re having any of these common symptoms of depression, it’s time to talk to your doctor and get screened for SAD and depression.



### Do You Know Your Benefits?

There is a lot you can learn from your

Member Handbook and our website, [mhswi.com](http://mhswi.com). You can learn about:

- How to find a doctor or therapist
- Covered benefits
- Extra benefits like \$100 toward better eyeglass frames or \$80 toward contact lenses

The Member Handbook is on our website at [mhswi.com](http://mhswi.com) under Member Resources.

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### Get Glasses or Contacts!

Get your covered yearly eye exam and you will get your lenses and frames covered as well. But do you like to upgrade? This health plan gives you MORE. We offer an additional \$100 allowance for better frames or an \$80 allowance for contact lenses.

# Get Enough Vitamin D

HOW TO FILL YOUR DIET WITH SUNSHINE

Vitamin D, also known as the sunshine vitamin, is one of the most important nutrients for good health. But you may not get enough in the fall and winter months when there’s less sunshine. Here’s how to spot signs you need more, understand your risk, and discover easy ways to ensure your levels are kept topped up.

Vitamin D boosts your immune system, improves muscle strength, and reduces inflammation. It also helps absorb calcium and prevent osteoporosis. “Vitamin D plays a crucial role in maintaining optimum health,” says Fahd Al Qureshah, Ph.D. candidate and lead author of a study on the effects of vitamin D. Studies have shown an association between low levels of vitamin D, and increased risk of diabetes, cancer, osteoporosis, heart attack, and other conditions.



Common symptoms include frequent coughs and colds, fatigue, low mood, and poor sleep. Low vitamin D levels can also result in reduced bone density and an increased risk of fractures.

## WHO’S MOST AT RISK FOR VITAMIN D DEFICIENCY?

If you fall into one of the populations below, talk to your doctor about taking a daily vitamin D supplement.

- People with darker skin tones
- People over 65 years of age
- People with excess body fat
- Pregnant and breast-feeding women
- People who spend a lot of time indoors

Other than taking a daily supplement or tropical vacation, the easiest way to up your vitamin D levels is through food. Foods that are rich in vitamin D include fatty fish, such as salmon, mackerel, sardines, and tuna. Other good choices include red meat, liver, egg yolks, and vitamin-fortified foods, such as milk, cereal, or juice.

AGE	DAILY INTAKE
Infants (birth to 12 months)	400 IU
Children, teenagers, adults, and pregnant or breast-feeding women	600 IU
Seniors (71 years and older)	800 IU



## 3 WINTER SPORTS TO GET YOU OUT IN THE SNOW

Fresh winter powder is more than just pretty scenery. “There are so many different snow sports to get you moving,” says Matthew Heron, recreation supervisor at the Resort at Squaw Creek in Olympic Valley, California.

### Alpine Skiing

If you’re new to skiing, a lesson is the best place to start, Heron says. “Any length of lesson will put you in a better position to succeed.” He recommends that you set realistic expectations when you go for the first time. You will probably fall a few times! Alpine skiing can be as vigorous as you want, depending on how hard you push yourself.

Calories burned per hour: 408\*

### Cross-Country Skiing

Like alpine skiing, taking even a 60-minute lesson in cross-country skiing will help reduce the learning curve, Heron says. He recommends that newbies avoid fresh, deep snow, which is harder to ski through.

Calories burned per hour: 544\*

### Snowshoeing

Snowshoeing can be a vigorous exercise if you want it to be. “If the snow is deep, [it] can be very strenuous and a great workout, but if you stick to groomed trails, or packed powder, it can be a nice, easy walk,” Heron says. What’s more, snowshoeing requires no instruction at all to start.

Calories burned per hour: 544\*

\*for a 150 lbs person, at moderate activity level





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a family event.  
SEE PAGE 5.

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