Are vaccines safe?

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In addition to being safe, vaccines prevent serious, sometimes deadly, diseases. However, vaccines are not completely safe for everyone. August is National Immunization Awareness Month and a perfect opportunity to learn more.

Before being vaccinated, you should be given written information, including questions to determine whether the vaccine you are considering is safe for you. People who are allergic to eggs (some vaccines may have small amounts of egg protein in them) or have had an allergic reaction to prior vaccines should be immunized under specific medical protocols. The same applies to people who have a compromised immune system, such as people living with HIV or those undergoing chemotherapy. No one with a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome (a severe skin reaction) within six weeks of a previous immunization should be vaccinated.

Each vaccine has its own checklist; if you meet the basic criteria, you should be safe. After receiving the shot, you may “feel like you’re coming down with something.” This is a normal reaction, usually meaning that your body is building an immune response. It is also normal to feel sore at the site where you received the shot.

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