

Heard the one about flu and warm weather?

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Many people miss the point about remedies and realities during the cold and flu season, doctors around the United States say.

Doctors said a lot of common knowledge about colds and flu is grounded in myths, which spread as fast -- or faster -- than the viruses, ABC News said Thursday. Since not much is really known about colds and flu, people look for alternative explanations.

"Virtually everything we 'know' about getting colds and the flu is myth," said Neil Brooks, former president of the American Academy of Family Physicians. "The only things that prevent colds are hand washing and-or avoiding contact with other people, and I don't know if hand washing really works."

Does warm winter influence influenza? Maybe. A University of Wisconsin researcher said a study linked warmer weather to lower flu and pneumonia death rates.

But some myths can hurt, such as the one about getting flu from a flu shot.

"There is no truth to it," said William Schaffner, chair of the preventive medicine department at Vanderbilt University. "This myth actually prevents many people from getting the influenza vaccine, thus exposing them to the serious infection caused by that virus."

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