MADI'S STORY:

FLU VACCINE 101

YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS THIS CLASS!

Ages 13 - 17

FEATURING:

MADI

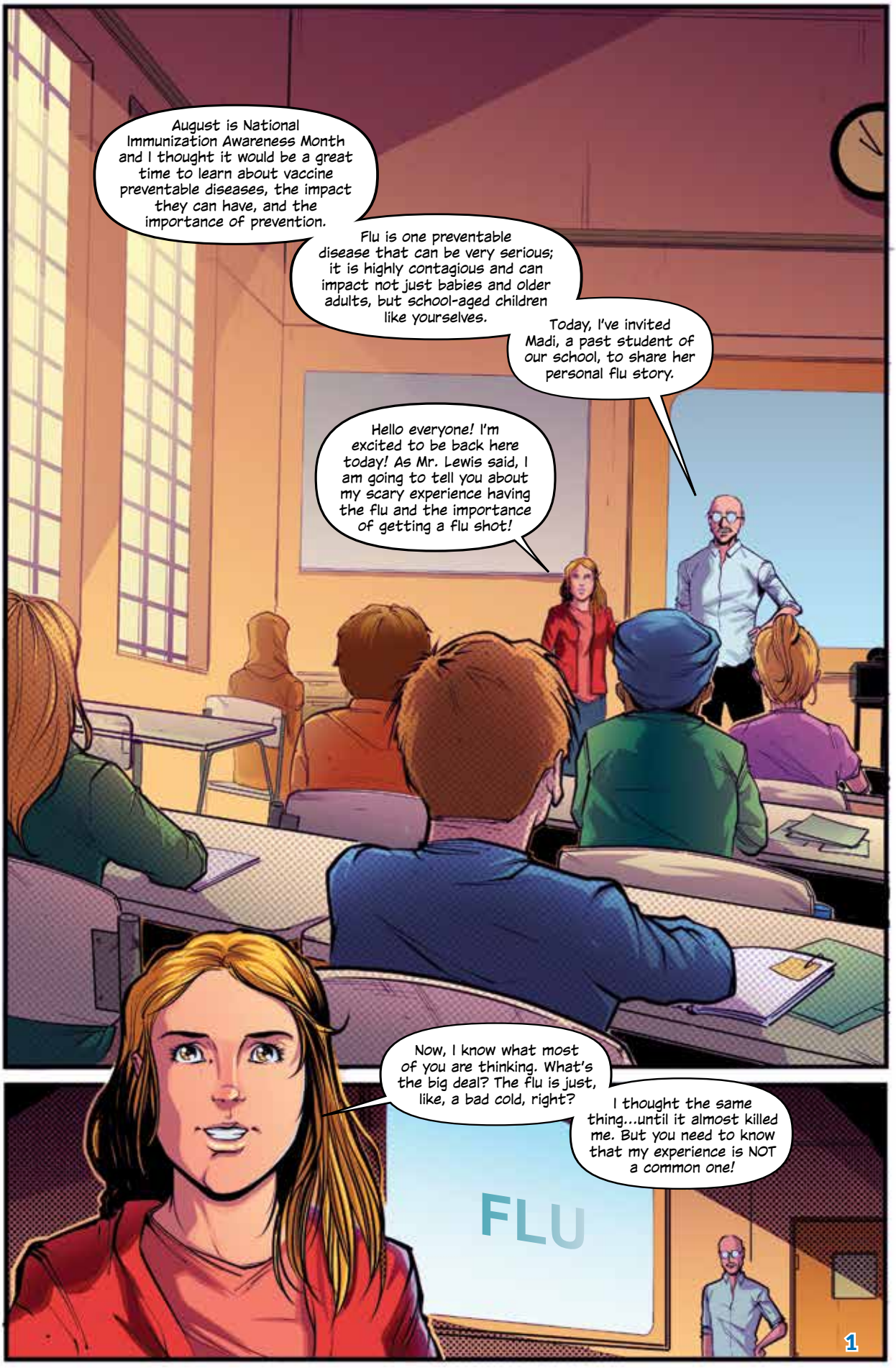
The star of this book

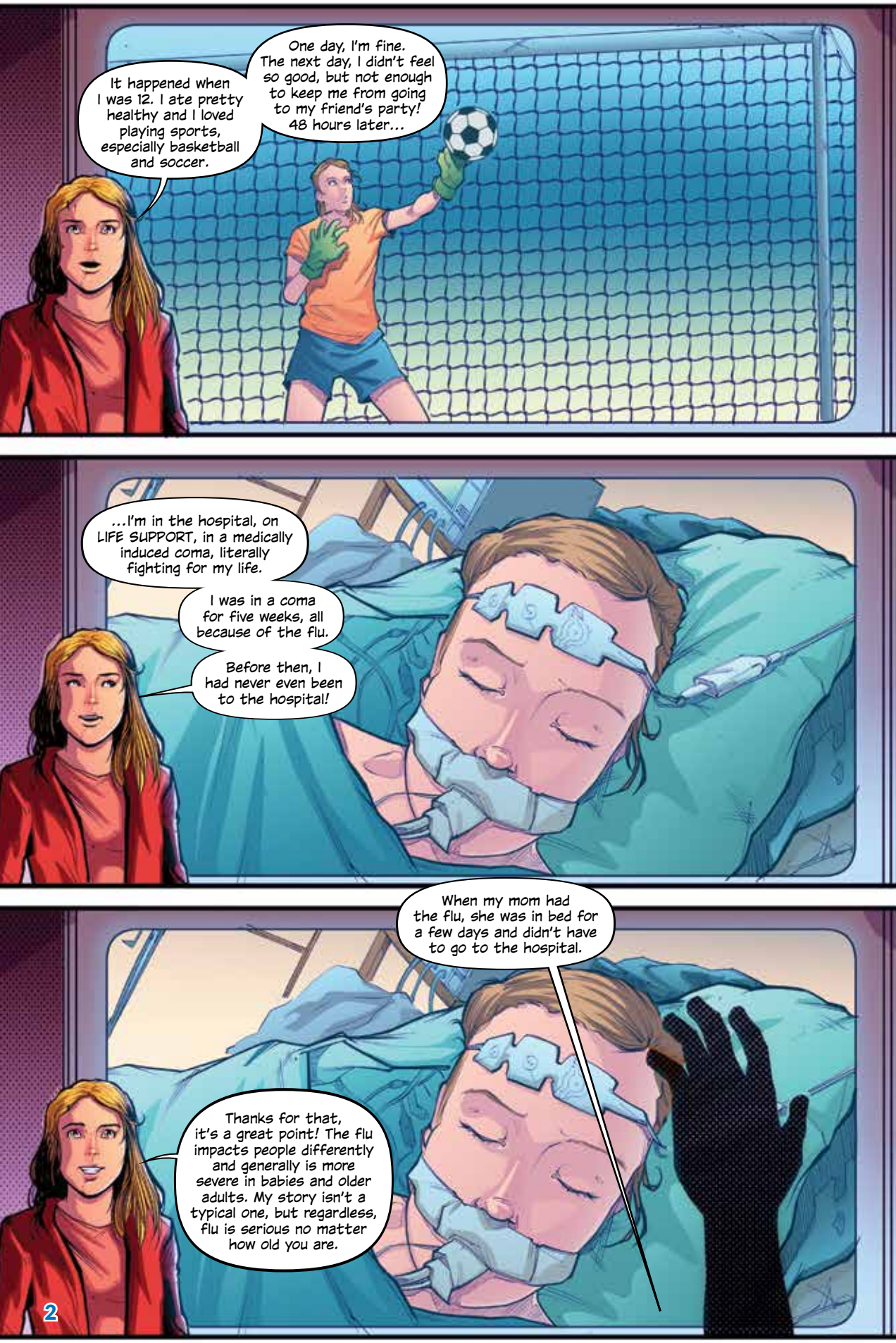
My name is Madi and I live with my Mom, Dad, and our dog, Swayze.

I'm 21 but I clearly remember when I was 12 years old and became really sick with the flu. I even spent several weeks in the hospital! Now, the flu doesn't usually make people as sick as I was, but I would hate to think that anyone would have to go through what I experienced! It's important to get your flu vaccine every year. I became sick with the flu the one year I missed it.

Sharing my story with you is so important to me. After reading it, I hope that you better understand what the flu is and how the flu vaccine helps stop people getting the flu. The flu can affect anyone, even healthy and sporty people like me. The best way to help avoid getting the flu is to make sure you get your flu vaccine every year!

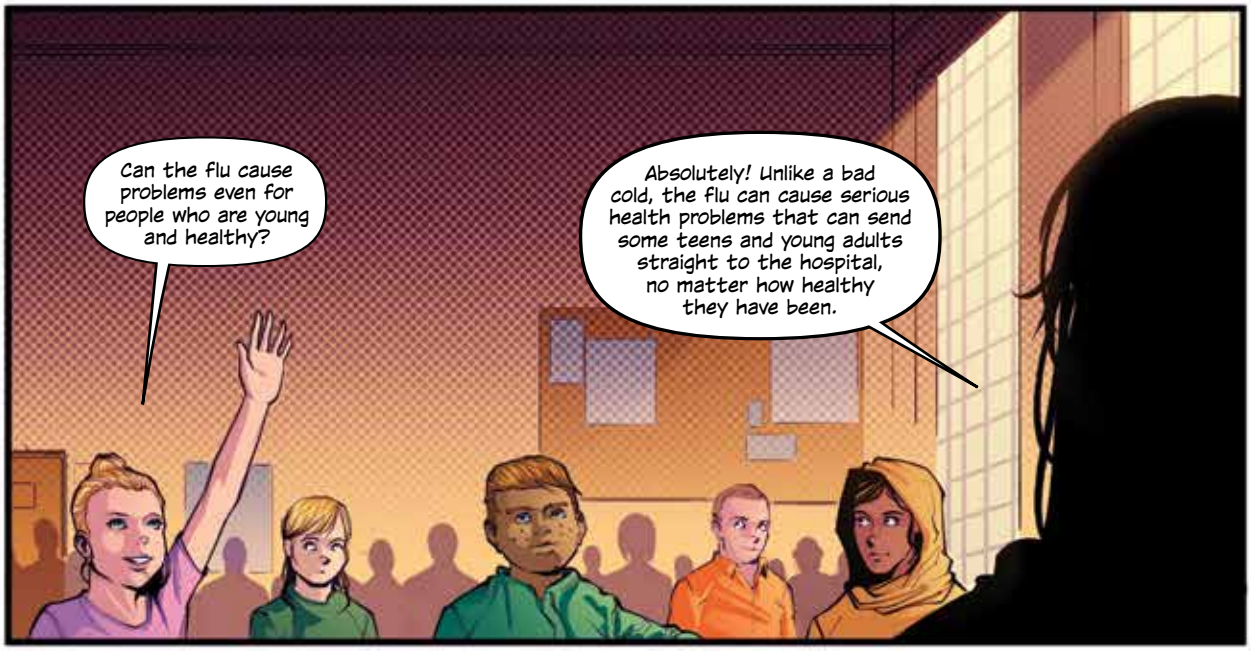
Madi Allen


August is National Immunization Awareness Month and I thought it would be a great time to learn about vaccine preventable diseases, the impact they can have, and the importance of prevention.
Flu is one preventable disease that can be very serious; it is highly contagious and can impact not just babies and older adults, but school-aged children like yourselves.
Today, I've invited Madi, a past student of our school, to share her personal flu story.
Hello everyone! I'm excited to be back here today! As Mr. Lewis said, I am going to tell you about my scary experience having the flu and the importance of getting a flu shot!
Now, I know what most of you are thinking. What's the big deal? The flu is just, like, a bad cold, right?
I thought the same thing...until it almost killed me. But you need to know that my experience is NOT a common one!
FLU


It happened when I was 12. I ate pretty healthy and I loved playing sports, especially basketball and soccer.
One day, I'm fine. The next day, I didn't feel so good, but not enough to keep me from going to my friend's party! 48 hours later...
...I'm in the hospital, on LIFE SUPPORT, in a medically induced coma, literally fighting for my life.
I was in a coma for five weeks, all because of the flu.
Before then, I had never even been to the hospital!
When my mom had the flu, she was in bed for a few days and didn't have to go to the hospital.
Thanks for that, it's a great point! The flu impacts people differently and generally is more severe in babies and older adults. My story isn't a typical one, but regardless, flu is serious no matter how old you are.

SYMPTOMS	COLD	FLU	*COVID-19
Fever	Uncommon	High Fever Common	High Fever Common
Aches	Very little	Common	Sometimes
Chills	Uncommon	Common	Common
Tiredness, weakness	Sometimes	Common	Common
Sneezing	Common	Sometimes	Uncommon
Cough	Mild to moderate	Common	Common
Stuffy nose	Common	Sometimes	Uncommon
Sore throat	Common	Sometimes	Sometimes
Headache	Uncommon	Sometimes	Sometimes
Difficulty breathing	Uncommon	Uncommon	Sometimes
Loss of taste or smell	Uncommon	Uncommon	Sometimes

*COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered virus. These are COVID-19 symptoms as of May 2020, per the Centers for Disease Control.

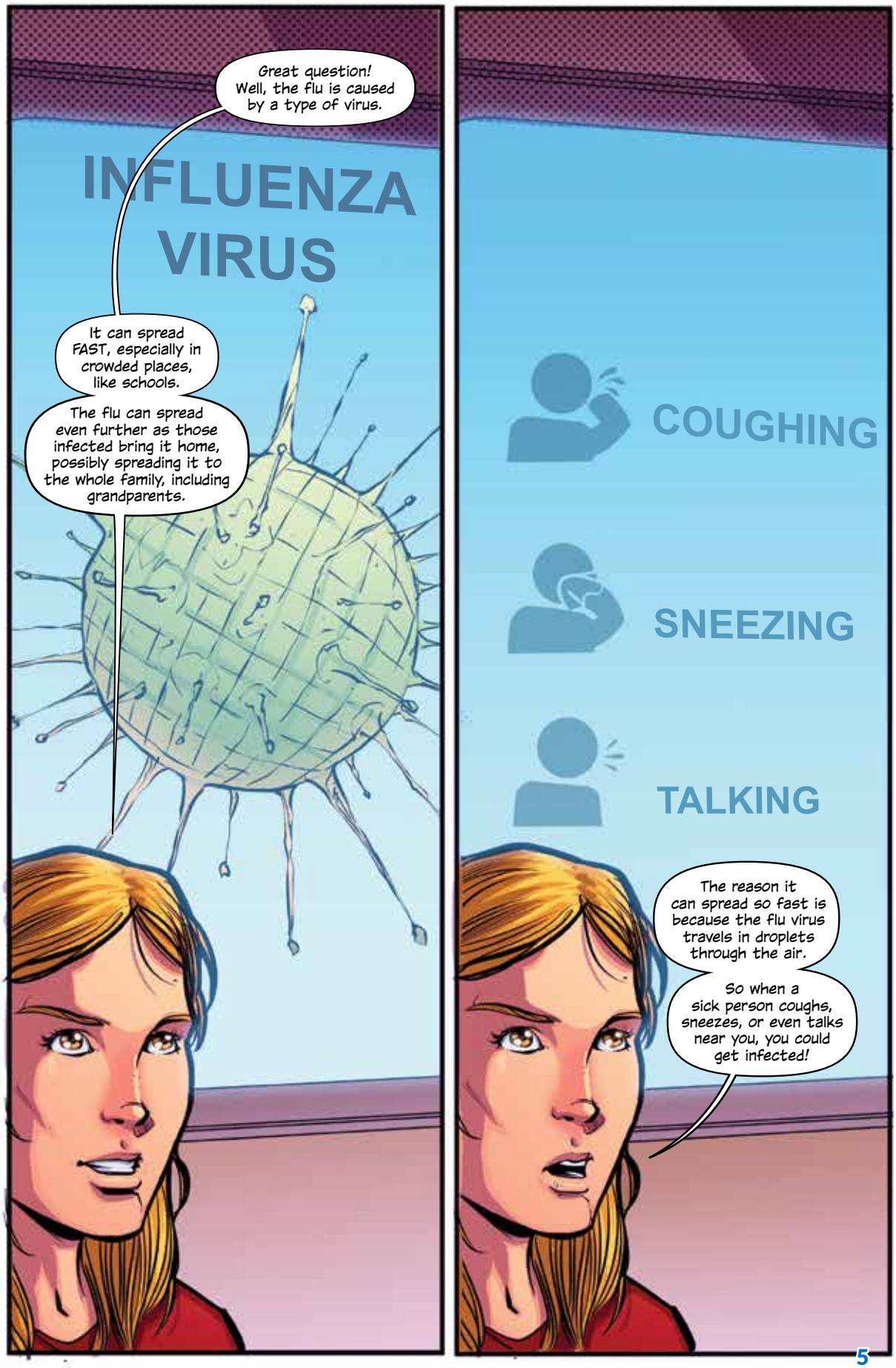


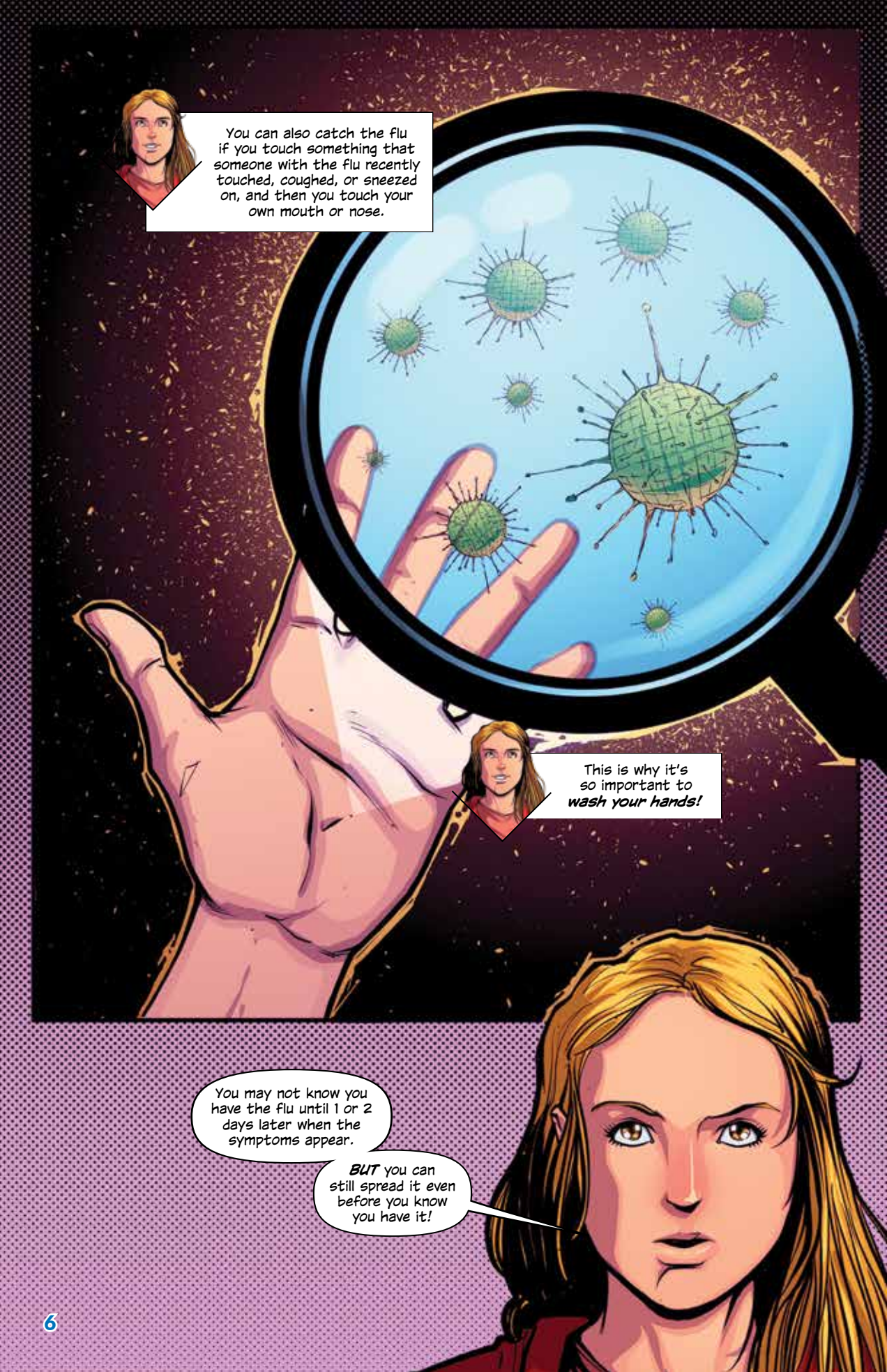
The flu also wasn't a fun sick day where I got to play video games and watch TV!

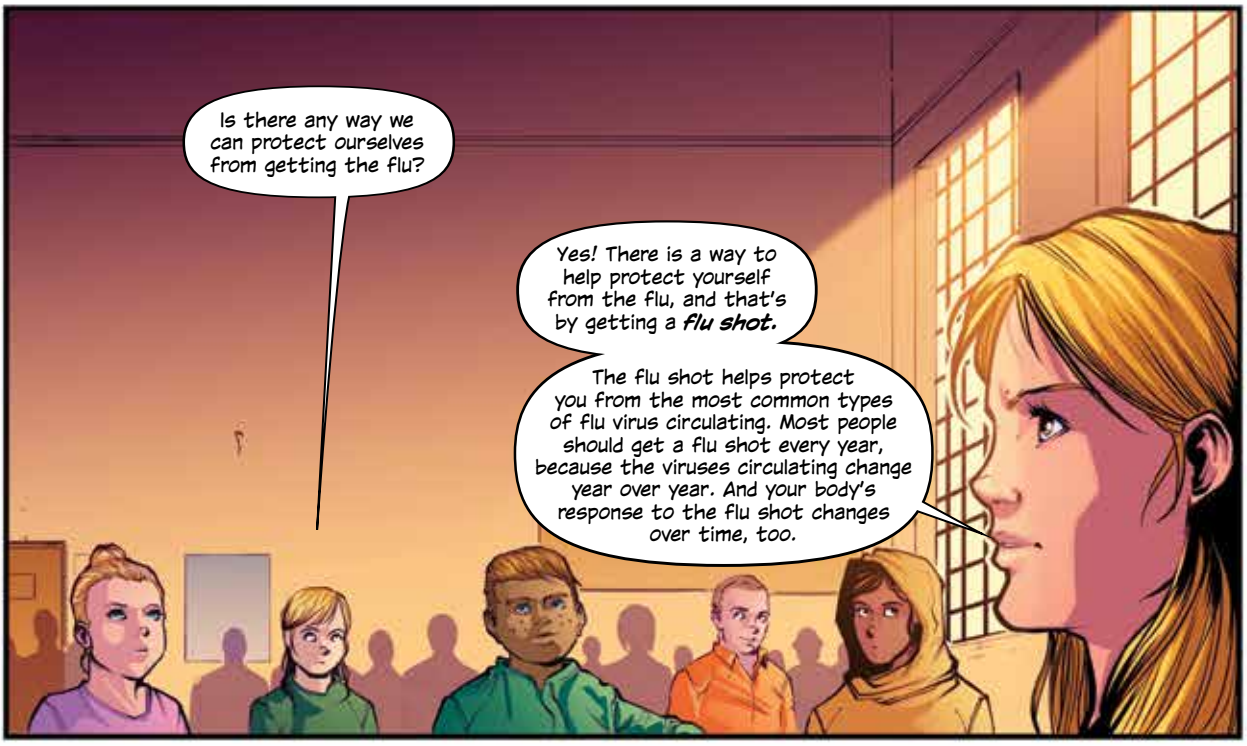
I felt so sick, I didn't feel like doing anything. I missed out on family, school, sports, and hanging out with friends. It was awful for me!

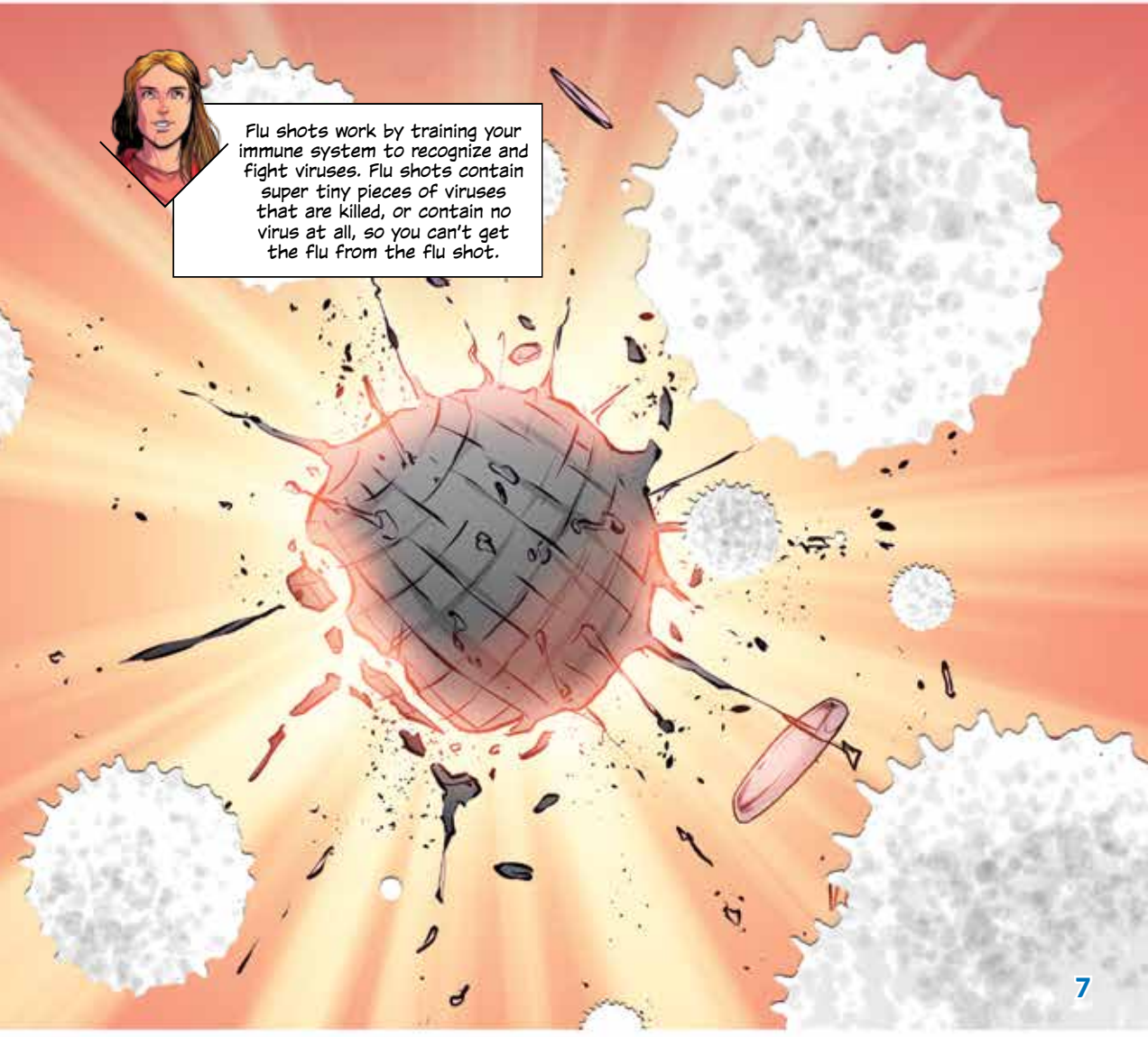
My entire body ached, all I could do was lay in bed. No matter what I did, I couldn't get comfortable. I felt every movement, including my eyeballs move and it was not pleasant. It hurt!

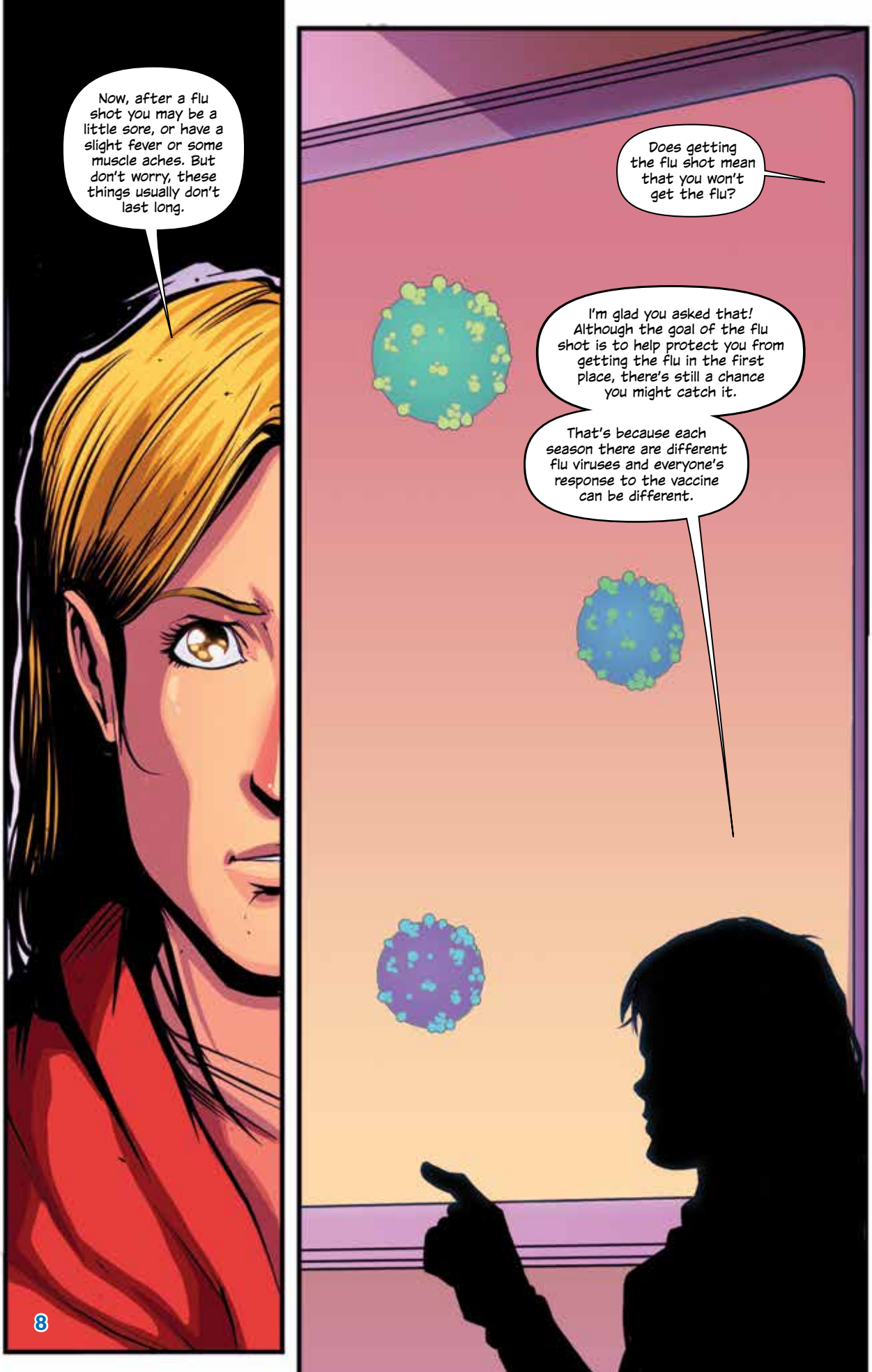
What exactly causes the flu?

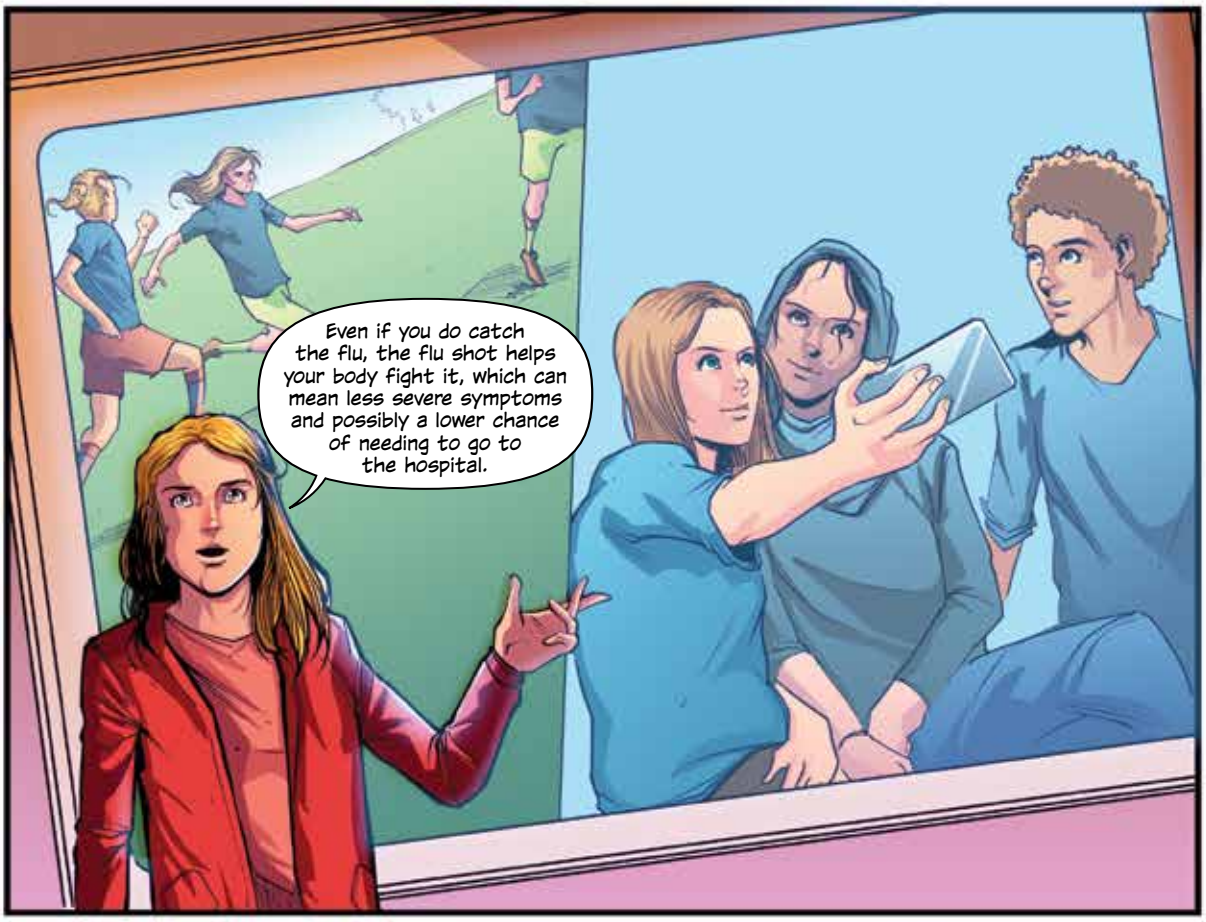

Great question! Well, the flu is caused by a type of virus.
INFLUENZA VIRUS
It can spread FAST, especially in crowded places, like schools.
The flu can spread even further as those infected bring it home, possibly spreading it to the whole family, including grandparents.
COUGHING
SNEEZING
TALKING
The reason it can spread so fast is because the flu virus travels in droplets through the air.
So when a sick person coughs, sneezes, or even talks near you, you could get infected!

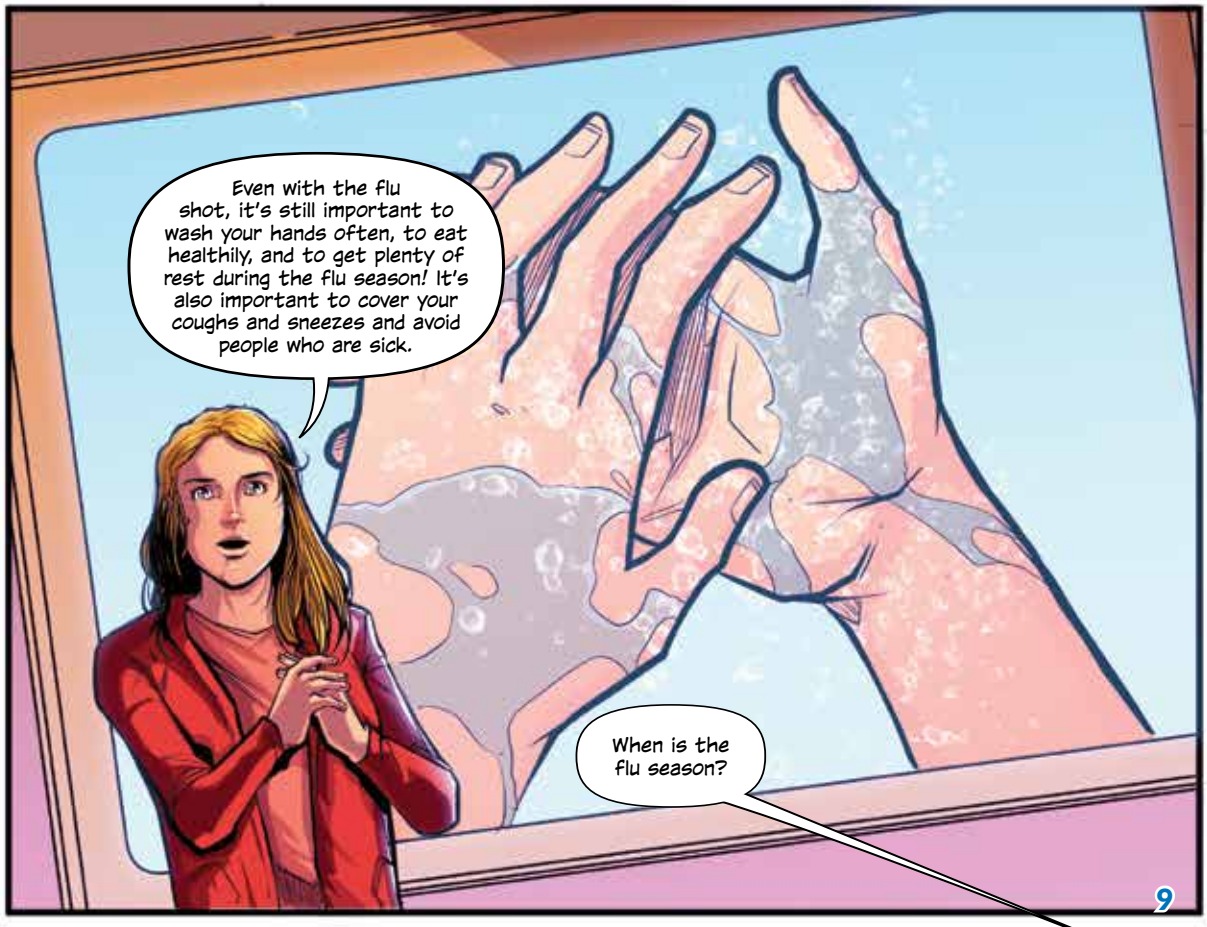

You can also catch the flu if you touch something that someone with the flu recently touched, coughed, or sneezed on, and then you touch your own mouth or nose.
This is why it's so important to ***wash your hands!***
You may not know you have the flu until 1 or 2 days later when the symptoms appear.
BUT you can still spread it even before you know you have it!

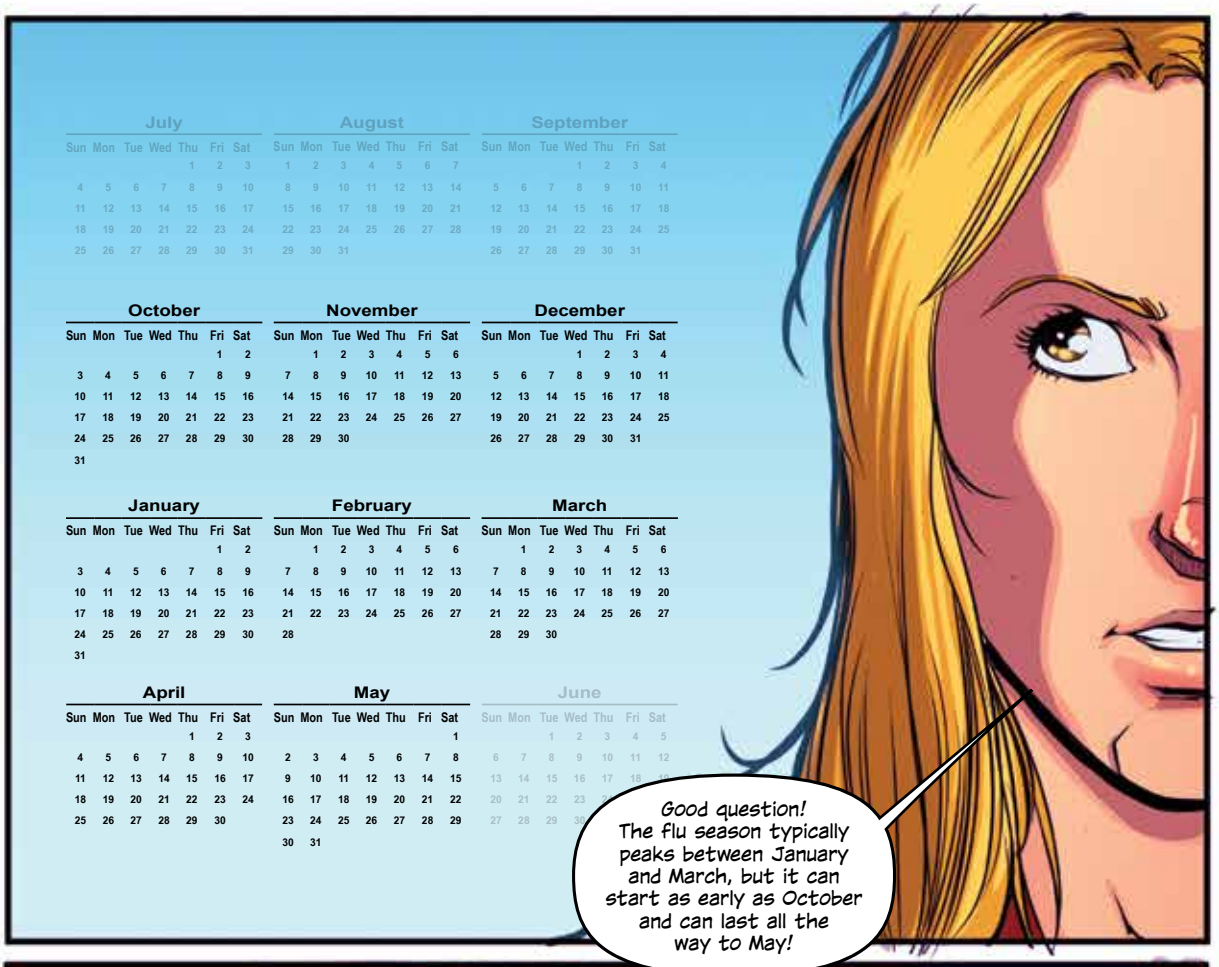

Is there any way we can protect ourselves from getting the flu?
Yes! There is a way to help protect yourself from the flu, and that's by getting a ***flu shot.***
The flu shot helps protect you from the most common types of flu virus circulating. Most people should get a flu shot every year, because the viruses circulating change year over year. And your body's response to the flu shot changes over time, too.

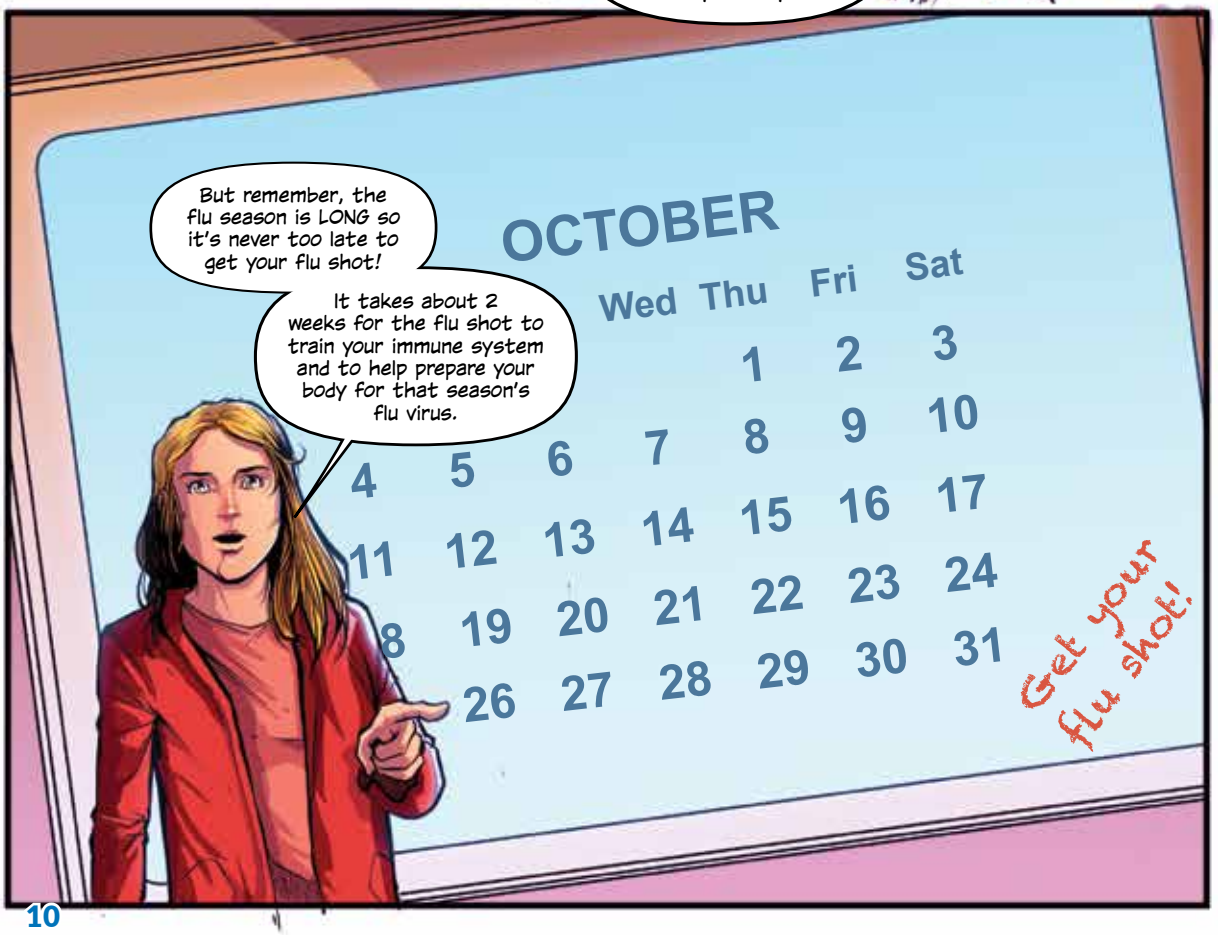

Flu shots work by training your immune system to recognize and fight viruses. Flu shots contain super tiny pieces of viruses that are killed, or contain no virus at all, so you can't get the flu from the flu shot.

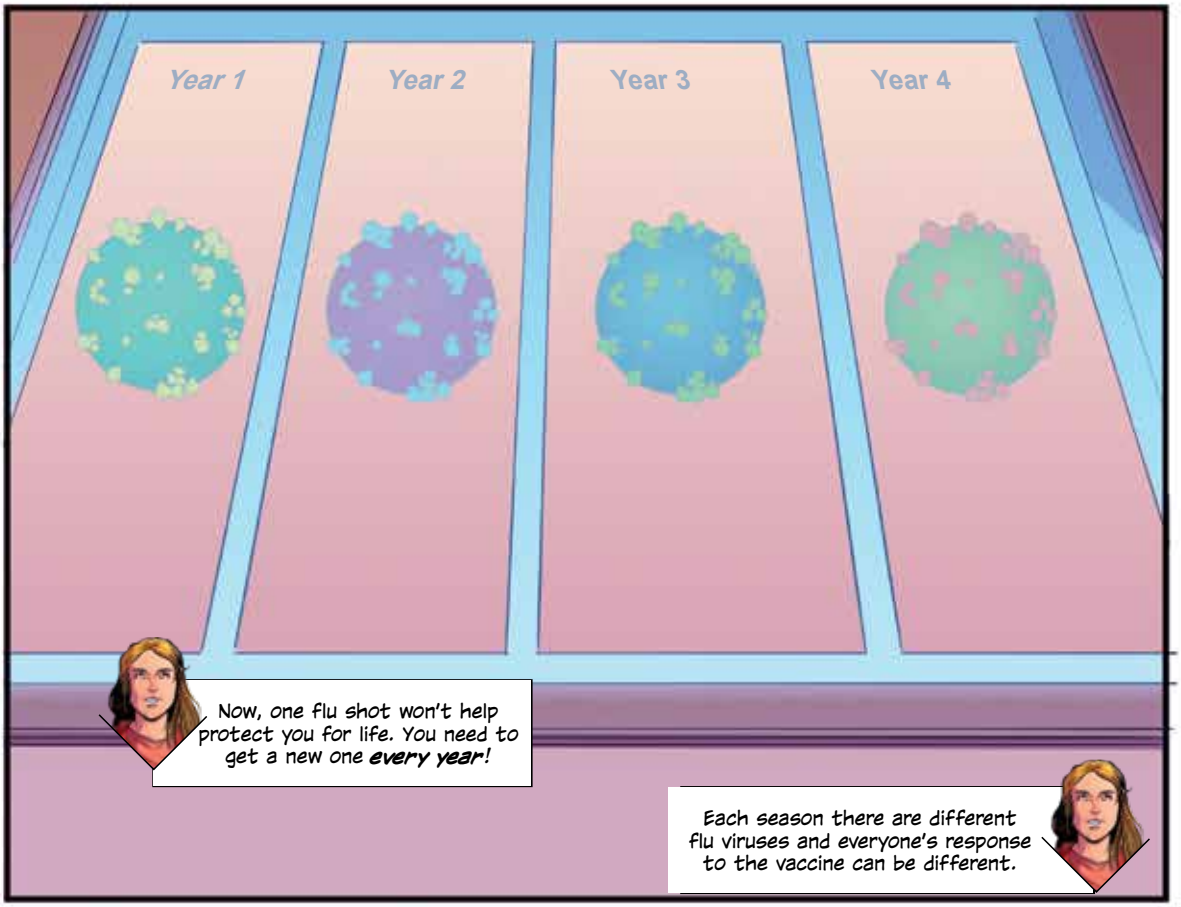

Now, after a flu shot you may be a little sore, or have a slight fever or some muscle aches. But don't worry, these things usually don't last long.
Does getting the flu shot mean that you won't get the flu?
I'm glad you asked that! Although the goal of the flu shot is to help protect you from getting the flu in the first place, there's still a chance you might catch it.
That's because each season there are different flu viruses and everyone's response to the vaccine can be different.

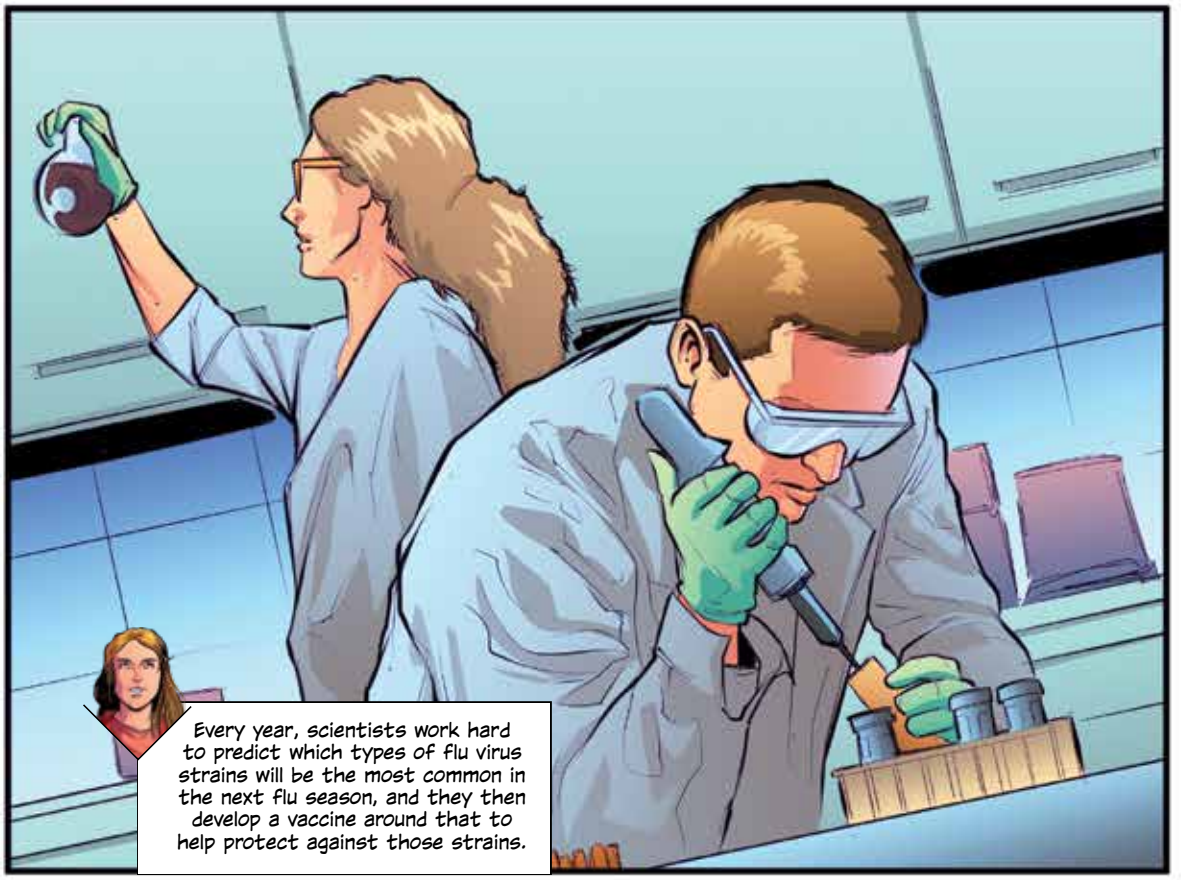

Even if you do catch the flu, the flu shot helps your body fight it, which can mean less severe symptoms and possibly a lower chance of needing to go to the hospital.


Even with the flu shot, it's still important to wash your hands often, to eat healthily, and to get plenty of rest during the flu season! It's also important to cover your coughs and sneezes and avoid people who are sick.
When is the flu season?


Good question! The flu season typically peaks between January and March, but it can start as early as October and can last all the way to May!


But remember, the flu season is LONG so it's never too late to get your flu shot!
It takes about 2 weeks for the flu shot to train your immune system and to help prepare your body for that season's flu virus.
OCTOBER
Wed Thu Fri Sat
Get your flu shot!


Year 1
Year 2
Year 3
Year 4
Now, one flu shot won't help protect you for life. You need to get a new one *every year*!
Each season there are different flu viruses and everyone's response to the vaccine can be different.


Every year, scientists work hard to predict which types of flu virus strains will be the most common in the next flu season, and they then develop a vaccine around that to help protect against those strains.

In summary, the flu can be so much worse than just a bad cold. It can not only be life threatening, but life-taking. Although my experience wasn't a typical one, it shows how serious the flu can be.

I'm not telling you this to scare you, just to educate you, because you are ***not helpless!***

By taking the time to get your flu shot, you're helping to protect yourself against the flu.

CLAP CLAP

The flu and the flu vaccine— things to remember!

CLAP CLAP

- The flu can cause serious health problems, even if you've always been healthy
- The best way to help prevent the flu is by getting vaccinated
- You need to get the vaccine every year
- You can't get the flu from the flu vaccine

CLAP CLAP

Thank you.

The end!

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