

Toolbox Talks

Wellness, Health, & Safety Alert : Flu Prevention Part 1

Wellness, Health, & Safety Alert Bulletin

January 11, 2013

Flu Season is at a record high: Common Sense Flu Prevention & Awareness Tips:

The national flu epidemic is getting worse by the day: Hospitals & Emergency rooms are being flooded by flu patients across the country. Some hospitals have put up tents outside hospitals to treat just flu patients. & the CDC says the percentage of people going to the hospital for treatment of flu symptoms has doubled in the past month.

Prevention & washing your hands are key critical components to increased cold & flu prevention. While stressing all prevention methods we cant forget about co-workers. One of the fastest ways to contaminate your co-workers is from your **water cooler spigots. PLEASE, dont take your used water bottles or drinking containers & hold them up directly against the spout! The Dept. of Health has informed me that virus or bacteria can live on these for up to 2 hours.**



Prevention is one of our greatest defenses against any bacteria & virus but we must all contribute. We are part of our nations critical infrastructure that must stay healthy. Our customers' telecommunications systems are essential.

Please review the following common sense flu prevention tips:

- ✓ **Wash your hands with soap & warm water frequently & thoroughly.**
- ✓ **Practice social distancing.** Don't move in toward someone who is coughing or sneezing; politely take a step back.
- ✓ **Practice proper sneezing & coughing etiquette.** Don't cough or sneeze into your hand & then use your hand to use a pen at the bank or open a door or refrigerator. **Sneeze & cough into your elbow.**
- ✓ **Use a hand sanitizer & sanitizer wipes on your phones, keyboards, & door handles as well as when soap & water is not available.**

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COLD & SEASONAL FLU SYMPTOMS

SYMPTOM	COLD	SEASONAL FLU
FEVER	Fever is rare with a cold.	Fever is common with the seasonal flu.
COUGHING	A hacking, productive (mucus-producing) cough is often present with a cold.	A dry and hacking cough is often present with the seasonal flu.
ACHES	Slight body aches and pains can be part of a cold.	Moderate body aches are common with the seasonal flu.
STUFFY NOSE	Stuffy nose is commonly present with a cold and typically resolves spontaneously within a week.	A runny nose is commonly present with the seasonal flu.
CHILLS	Chills are uncommon with a cold.	Chills are mild to moderate with the seasonal flu.
TIREDNESS	Tiredness is fairly mild with a cold.	Tiredness is moderate and more likely referred to as a lack of energy with the seasonal flu.
SNEEZING	Sneezing is commonly present with a cold	Sneezing is common present with the seasonal flu.
SUDDEN SYMPTOMS	Cold symptoms tend to develop over a few days .	Symptoms tend to develop over a few days and include flushed face, loss of appetite, dizziness and/or vomiting/nausea. Symptoms usually last 4-7 days, depending on the individual. Diarrhea is common.
HEADACHE	A headache is fairly uncommon with a cold.	A headache is fairly common with the seasonal flu.
SORE THROAT	Sore throat is commonly present with a cold.	Sore throat is commonly present with the seasonal flu.
CHEST DISCOMFORT	Chest discomfort is mild to moderate with a cold.	Chest discomfort is moderate with the seasonal flu. If it turns severe seek medical attention immediately!

What should I do if I get sick?

If you live in areas where swine influenza cases have been identified & become ill with influenza-like symptoms, including fever, body aches, runny nose, sore throat, nausea, or vomiting/diarrhea, you may want to contact your healthcare provider, particularly if you are worried about your symptoms. Your health care provider will determine whether influenza testing or treatment is needed. **If you are sick, you should stay home & avoid contact with other people as much as possible to keep from spreading your illness to others.**

Information found at nationalsafety.wordpress.com ⇨ Article written by Ken Oswald

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Wellness, Health, & Safety Alert : Flu Prevention Part 2

If you become ill, & experience any of the following warning signs, seek emergency medical care. **In children emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:**

- ✓ Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- ✓ Bluish skin color
- ✓ Not drinking enough fluids
- ✓ Not waking up or not interacting
- ✓ Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- ✓ Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever & worse cough
- ✓ Fever with a rash

In adults, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:

- ✓ Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- ✓ Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- ✓ Sudden dizziness
- ✓ Confusion
- ✓ Severe or persistent vomiting

Some CDC Doctors recommend the following Flu & Cold wellness tips to help you recover:

For chest congestion:

- ✓ Drink plenty of fluids (8 to 10 cups a day) such as water, sports drinks, herbal teas, fruit drinks, or Ginger ale. Fluids help break up congestion, prevent dehydration, & keep your throat moist.
- ✓ Inhaled steam can ease congestion too. Create steam with a humidifier, or steam up the bathroom by running a hot shower.

For nasal congestion:

- ✓ Relieve clogged nasal & sinus passages caused by excessive mucus with either decongestant pills or with a nasal spray. These are best taken following a hot shower & lots of nose blowing to clear out the mucus as much as possible. Then use a hand sanitizer to kill germs on your hands.

For fever & pain, body aches & tiredness:

- ✓ Rest get your full 8 hours of sleep at night if possible.
- ✓ Over-the-counter medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) can help decrease fever & ease sore throat pain & body aches.

For cough:

- ✓ For a dry hacking cough, you may choose a medication that contains a cough suppressant. Look for over-the-counter medications that contain dextromethorphan.
- ✓ For a cough that produces excessive mucus, or phlegm, you may want to use an expectorant that loosens phlegm. Guaifenesin is the most common active ingredient.



For sore throat:

- ✓ A warm salt-water gargle can relieve a scratchy throat.
- ✓ Lozenges, mouthwashes, & sprays that contain a numbing ingredient can ease the pain.

While getting a flu vaccine each year is the best way to protect against flu, influenza antiviral drugs can fight against influenza, offering a second line of defense against the flu. Antiviral drugs are an important second line of defense in the prevention & treatment of flu:

- ✓ Antiviral drugs are important in the treatment & prevention of influenza.
- ✓ Influenza antiviral drugs can be used to treat the flu or to prevent infection with flu viruses.
- ✓ Treatment with antivirals should begin within 48 hours of getting sick, & can reduce your symptoms & shorten the time you are sick.
- ✓ When used for prevention, antivirals are 70%-90% effective in preventing infection with influenza viruses.
- ✓ Antiviral drugs are effective across all age & risk groups.
- ✓ **Two antiviral drugs (oseltamivir, brand name Tamiflu®, and zanamivir, brand name Relenza®) are approved for treatment of the flu.**
- ✓ Oseltamivir is approved to treat flu in people one year of age & older.
- ✓ Zanamivir is approved to treat flu in people 7 years & older.
- ✓ These are prescription medications, & a doctor should be consulted before the drugs are used.
- ✓ Antiviral treatment lasts for 5 days & **should be started within 2 days of illness**, so if you get flu-like symptoms, seek medical care early on.

PREVENTION TIPS:

- ✓ cough & sneeze into your elbow
- ✓ wash hands with soap & warm water for a minimum of 15 -20 seconds. Sing your abc's or happy birthday
- ✓ use hand sanitizer when soap & water are not available
- ✓ avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth without washing or using hand sanitizer first
- ✓ stay home if you are sick to avoid contaminating your co-workers

 **National Flu Situation Page 2013** 

January 16, 2013

With the flu epidemic in full swing, it's hard to know what to do & what not to do. **Where are most of the flu cases being reported? How widespread is it? Should you get a vaccine or not? Are vaccination supplies running low? Where should I get vaccinated?**

For all things flu related, there's now a single page at **vetoo.com**. Head to the National Flu Situation Page 2013 to gain access to maps, videos, newsfeeds, social media, & more. Choose how you want to view it (how many windows wide-wise across the page by how many down).

There's advice on how to avoid catching the flu, even while at work, & discussions on the effectiveness of the flu vaccine.

It's a one-stop center that'll provide everything you need about the flu epidemic & then some.