

SafetyToolboxTalks

www.safetytoolboxtalks.com

Flu Prevention 2010-11

Influenza or "The Flu" is a serious contagious disease that can lead to hospitalization and even death. In 2009-2010, a new and very different flu virus (called 2009 H1N1) spread worldwide causing the first flu pandemic in more than 40 years. Flu is unpredictable, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) expects the 2009 H1N1 virus to spread this upcoming season along with other seasonal flu viruses. The CDC urges you to take the following actions to protect yourself and others from influenza:

Take time to get a flu vaccine.

CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses.

While there are many different flu viruses, the flu vaccine protects against the three viruses that research suggests will be most common.

The 2010-2011 flu vaccine will protect against an influenza A H3N2 virus, an influenza B virus and the 2009 H1N1 virus that caused so much illness last season.

Everyone 6 months of age and older should get vaccinated against the flu as soon as the 2010-2011 season vaccine is available.

People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children, pregnant women, people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older. Vaccination of high risk persons is especially important to decrease their risk of severe flu illness.

Vaccination also is important for health care workers, and other people who live with or care for high risk people to keep from spreading flu to high risk people.

Children younger than 6 months are at high risk of serious flu illness, but are too young to be vaccinated. People who care for them should be vaccinated instead.

Take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs.

Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.

Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.

Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.* This is especially important after you go out in public and do things such as:

- o Touch shopping carts
- o Touch staircase hand rails
- o Shake hands
- o Utilize common areas or items such as restrooms or hand tools.

Wash your hands or utilize hand sanitizer before and after eating or smoking.

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.