

Live Well, Work Well

February 2015



Presented by Holmes Murphy & Associates

Avoiding the Flu

Flu season is worse than usual this year, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has stated that this year's flu epidemic is showing elevated activity.

Even if you got the flu shot this year, you might still be susceptible to getting sick. Each season, the flu vaccine is designed to protect against the flu viruses that researchers determine are most likely to circulate that year. This is why the flu vaccine is more effective some years than others. This year, the flu vaccine may not protect well against the more severe influenza A (H3N2) virus that is circulating. However, the CDC still recommends the flu vaccine as it should offer at least partial protection.

According to the CDC, the flu commonly spreads through droplets made when people cough, sneeze and talk, as well as when

people touch something with the flu virus on it and then touch their mouths, noses or eyes.

Children, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with disabilities and other health conditions are at increased risk of getting the flu. Whether or not you have been vaccinated, you can still take measures to protect yourself and others from the flu.

- When possible, avoid close contact with sick individuals.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water. If you can't wash your hands, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Don't touch your mouth, nose or eyes.
- Disinfect potentially contaminated surfaces, especially in shared areas such as the office kitchen.

In addition to keeping yourself healthy, you can help protect others from getting sick from your germs.

- Cover your nose and mouth when sneezing or coughing.
- Stay home for at least a day after your fever is gone, with the exception of getting medical care.

If you do get sick, aside from keeping your germs to yourself, here are a few suggestions for getting better as quickly as possible:

- Rest as much as possible.
- Drink plenty of water, broth and other clear fluids.
- Relieve symptoms by gargling with salt water, putting a humidifier in the room and covering yourself with a warm blanket.
- Talk to your doctor about a prescription antiviral medication to help with the flu.

When reading a lengthy document, print it out to help reduce eyestrain from reading on a screen.

Take Care of Your Eyes

February is Low Vision Awareness Month, highlighting the importance of taking care of your eyes and catching problems before you lose vision. Aside from annual eye exams, you can protect your eyes on a daily basis with a few healthy choices.

Eat right. Eating a healthy diet is as important for your eyes as it is for the rest of your body. A few foods that are especially good for eye health include vegetables such as spinach, kale and collard greens, and fish high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon and tuna.

Put on protective eyewear. Protect your eyes from the glare of the sun with sunglasses that block at least 99 percent of UVA and UVB radiation, and wear protective eyewear with polycarbonate lenses when engaging in activities that could harm your eyes, such as when using power tools or chemicals or when playing certain sports.

Rest your eyes. Reading, looking at an electronic screen or focusing at a short distance for an extended period can cause eyestrain. Avoid eye fatigue by glancing away from your work at least every 20 minutes.

Provided by:



10-minute Workouts

If you lack motivation for a 5-mile run or an hour workout session in the gym, new research reveals good news for you. Recent studies show that short but intense bouts of exercise can deliver fitness benefits. What does this mean for you and your fading New Year's resolution to get into better shape?

If you don't have the time for lengthy workouts, you can reap benefits from short spurts of exercise—the catch is that that short amount of time is high intensity. If you're looking for how to get started, you can try replicating the workout used in an exercise study conducted at McMaster University in Ontario, Canada:

- Warm up on a stationary bicycle for two minutes.
- Pedal "all-out" for 20 seconds, followed by two minutes of easy pedaling.
- Repeat the 20-second intensity and two-minute recovery periods twice more, for a total of 60 seconds of intense pedaling.
- Finish your 10-minute workout with a three-minute cool-down phase.

Workout volunteers in the study participated in three sessions per week for six weeks. At the end of that time, they showed improved endurance capacity, healthier blood pressure and other benefits.

With only a couple minutes of intense exercise needed a week, you don't have an excuse to not work out. Find an activity you enjoy, and commit to just a few minutes a week for better health.

Going Gluten-free



Gluten is a protein found in grains, including wheat, barley and rye. Individuals may choose a gluten-free diet for several reasons. Whether you have celiac disease, gluten intolerance or are simply looking for a diet change, here are a few tips for transitioning to a gluten-free diet:

- Stock up on foods that are naturally gluten-free, including beans, eggs, meats and fish, fruits, vegetables and most dairy items.
- Find alternatives for gluten-laden staples. As gluten-free diets become more common for health and popularity reasons, many food manufacturers are now producing gluten-free breads, cereals and desserts.
- If you have celiac disease, be extremely careful of cross-contamination. For example, don't share a jar of peanut butter with someone who spreads it on wheat bread. Simply dipping a knife back into the jar can cause contamination. Some individuals may experience a reaction to even a tiny amount of gluten, so be cautious with shared food and kitchens.



Apple and Celery Salad

Brighten up your winter dinner table with this crunchy salad served as a side dish or appetizer.

- 1 Tbsp. orange juice
- 2 Tbsp. light mayonnaise
- 2 cups apples, diced
- 1 cup celery, diced
- ½ cup raisins
- ½ cup peanuts, chopped

In a large bowl, mix orange juice with mayonnaise. Add apples, celery, raisins and peanuts to the dressing mixture and stir well. Serve at room temperature or chilled.

Yield: 6 servings. Each serving provides 150 calories, 8 g of fat, 40 mg of sodium, 1 g of protein and 2 g of fiber.

Source: USDA

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...for the health and well-being
of you and your family.

Influenza is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death.

Every flu season is different, and influenza can affect people differently. Even healthy people can get very sick from the flu and then spread it to others.



Facts About the Flu

The flu is an infection of the respiratory tract caused by the influenza virus. It usually causes mild to severe illness, but sometimes it can cause fatal complications.

Flu Symptoms

A person who has the flu often feels some or all of these symptoms:

- Fever and/or chills
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Cough and/or sore throat
- Nasal congestion
- Muscle or body aches
- Stomach ailments such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults)

How the Flu is Spread

The flu spreads primarily when someone coughs, sneezes or talks, allowing the virus to become airborne and then infect other people. It can also spread if a healthy individual touches a surface that was previously touched by an infected person, and then the healthy individual touches his or her own mouth, eyes or nose. People are typically contagious from the day before symptoms start until seven days after symptoms appear.

The timing of the flu virus is very unpredictable and can vary from season to season. Flu activity most commonly peaks in the United States between December and February. However, seasonal flu activity can begin as early as October and continue as late as May.

If You Get the Flu

If you contract the flu, it is important to take good care of yourself. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following:

- Stay home from work! It's your best chance for recovery, and you will avoid spreading the disease to others.
- Get sufficient sleep.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Take over-the-counter (OTC) medications appropriate for your symptoms.
- Most people do not need medical care, but consult your doctor if you are concerned. Also, seek immediate medical attention if you have any of the warning signs discussed on the next page.

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Serious complications can arise from the flu, including bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration and worsening of chronic medical conditions. This is why it is crucial to prevent contracting the virus in the first place.

These simple steps should be taken in order to avoid the flu:

- **Get a yearly flu vaccine.** It is the most important step in protecting against the virus. Flu vaccines are needed on a yearly basis because the body's immune response to a vaccination declines over time and because flu viruses are constantly mutating.
- **Take preventive actions.** Cover your mouth when you sneeze or cough. Try to avoid close contact with sick people and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Wash your hands often or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- **Take antiviral drugs** if your doctor recommends them. These are prescription drugs that fight the flu by keeping the viruses from reproducing in your body.
- **Maintain a healthy immune system** by eating healthy food, exercising, getting adequate sleep, controlling your stress level and avoiding smoking.

Emergency Situations

Occasionally, the flu can cause serious medical complications. It is important to seek immediate medical treatment if someone with the flu displays any of these signs.

In children, emergency warning signs include:

- Fast breathing (or difficulty breathing)
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or interacting with people
- Being so irritable the child does not want to be touched
- Flu-like symptoms improve, but then return with a fever and a worse cough
- Fever with a rash

In adults, emergency warning signs are:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Flu-like symptoms that improve, but then return with a fever and a worse cough

Flu Vaccination

The CDC recommends yearly flu shots for all individuals over six months of age. Vaccination is especially important for people who are at high risk for serious flu complications, such as young children, pregnant women, people with chronic medical conditions and people 65 years and older. While there are many different flu viruses, the seasonal flu vaccine is designed to protect against the main flu viruses that research suggests will cause the greatest spread of illness during the upcoming flu season. However, it is still possible to become ill from a strain of influenza not included in the vaccine. Even so, antibodies from a vaccination of one flu virus can sometimes provide protection against different but related viruses, and all recipients of a flu vaccine will be protected from the two main A-strains of flu, which are generally considered the most dangerous.

There are several [flu vaccine options](#) for the 2014-2015 flu season, which will greatly expand flu shot options for people who would otherwise be ineligible to receive a vaccination. The offerings include a new four-strain vaccine and nasal spray; a high-dose three-strain flu shot; two egg-free versions; and a shot that does not go beneath the skin.

All vaccines will protect against both Type A strains of influenza (H1N1 and H3N2), as well as a Type B strain. The four-strain, or quadrivalent, vaccine protects against both strains of Type B as well as the Type A strains. It has been difficult in the past to predict which B strain would become dominant in a given season, so the quadrivalent vaccine protects against both.

Also being offered this year are two egg-free shots for people who are allergic to eggs. Until recently, all vaccines were developed from chicken eggs and could not be given to people with egg allergies.



Contrary to popular belief, you cannot get the flu from the flu vaccine.

Prevention

newsletter

Additionally, a high-dose flu shot containing four times the usual dosage will be offered to older adults and other people with weakened immune systems as a way of boosting their bodies' responses to the virus.

Finally, people with an aversion to needles can choose to receive a "microneedle" version of the vaccine that is applied to the skin instead of the arm muscle.

Different flu shots are approved for people of different ages; there are even flu shots that are approved for use in people as young as six months of age. For many vaccine recipients, more than one type or brand of vaccine may be appropriate. Where more than one type of vaccine is appropriate and available, no preferential recommendation is made by the CDC for use of any influenza vaccine product over another. If you have questions about which vaccine is best for you, talk to your doctor or another health care provider.

Contrary to popular belief, you cannot contract the flu from the flu vaccine—but sometimes side effects mimic those of the flu, such as a headache, low fever and/or nasal congestion. However, these will only persist for a maximum of 24 hours.

These people should NOT get a flu vaccine without first consulting their physician:

- Those who have had a severe reaction or have developed Guillain-Barre syndrome within six weeks of getting an influenza vaccination; and
- Children under six months of age.

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the flu, stay
home and
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