



Keeping your health and well-being in the know

# MyHealth TALK

October 2010



## Stay out of the Doctor's Office, Prevent the Flu

Add these tips to your workplace routine:

- 1) Wash out your water bottle
- 2) Clean shared items such as phones, keyboards, handles, and door knobs with alcohol wipes or other sanitizers
- 3) Get lots of fresh air
- 4) Relax - Stress can decrease immunity
- 5) Wash your hands properly with soap and water.

## Proper Hand Washing

Follow these instructions for washing with soap and water:

- Wet your hands with warm, running water and apply liquid soap or use clean bar soap. Lather well.
- Rub your hands vigorously together for at least 15 to 20 seconds.
- Scrub all surfaces, including the backs of your hands, wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails.
- Rinse well.
- Dry your hands with a clean or disposable towel.
- Use a towel to turn off the faucet.

## Who you going to call?

**HINT: the answer is not “Ghostbusters™”**

When you're sick or injured, it's easy to feel flustered or overwhelmed. You want to get the best care, but you may not know what that is. Most of us don't want to take chances on our health. Your first reaction may be to go straight to the emergency room, but that's not always the best option. The following information will help you learn more about your health care options and what factors to consider in your decision-making.

### Do this first!

Always call your primary care doctor first. When you establish a strong relationship with your primary care doctor, he or she becomes your first and best resource to turn to as well as your health care partner.

### Visiting a Doctor's Office

When your condition is non-urgent, your doctor is usually your best choice for care. When you receive routine care with the same doctor, a relationship develops and your physician becomes familiar with you and your family health history, your personal health history, your medical conditions, current medications and other considerations. If you go to the emergency room for a non-urgent condition, the physician treating you will not have the same personal knowledge and investment in your good health. If you are unsure about what care to seek for a condition, call your physician, your best health partner, and he/she can advise you. If you do not have a strong relationship with your primary care doctor, it may be a good idea to start building one, for when an emergency might happen.

### Nurse Lines

A nurse line provides you the opportunity to promptly seek medical advice for your condition and treatment. Nurse lines are sometimes

made available through health plans and physician offices. They can help provide access to a nurse who can help you determine if your condition is urgent along with how and where to seek care. To find out if a nurse line is available to you, contact your health plan, employer or doctor's office.

### Urgent Care

When you or a family member has a condition that is not life-threatening, but needs to be treated quickly, urgent care is a good option. Urgent care centers are facilities that are usually open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They are equipped to handle problems that can be treated by your doctor along with other services that generally are not available at a doctor's office, such as X-rays, treatments for strains and sprains or minor cuts. A good use of an urgent care facility would be to treat a sprained ankle. Urgent care facilities are designed to bridge the gap between your primary care doctor's office and an emergency room. They tend to have shorter wait times and most insurance costs are less than costs for emergency care. However, first check with your insurance provider to make sure your urgent care visits are covered.

### Going to the Emergency Room

If you are facing a serious condition – heart attack, stroke, severe bleeding, head injury, or other major trauma – call 9-1-1 immediately. Do not take any chances with a life-threatening condition. There are three main ways to classify medical conditions. Emergency conditions are when vital functions, such as breathing, are compromised unless treated immediately. Semi-urgent conditions need treatment as soon as possible, but are not immediately life-threatening. Non-urgent conditions only require minor treatment and delay in addressing them will not change the outcome.

# Where to go when you become ill or injured

If you experience any of the following symptoms,

## Call your primary care doctor:



- A fever that lasts more than a few days
- Recurrent dizziness or nausea
- Vision changes or frequent headaches
- Unexplained changes in weight
- Severe abdominal pain
- Abdominal bleeding
- Pain that lingers or worsens after a week

1. Who needs a flu vaccine?

- a) You
- b) You
- c) You
- d) All of the above

Even healthy people can get the flu, and it can be serious.

Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine. **This means you.**

This season, protect yourself—and those around you—by getting a flu vaccine.

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If your doctor is unavailable,

## Go to urgent care for:



- Minor cuts (when bleeding is controlled)
- Tetanus shots
- Earaches/infections
- Infected toenails
- Travel immunizations
- Treatment of minor burns (when there is pain and redness)
- Sprains and strains
- Deep bruises
- Skin rashes
- Colds, cough, sore throat, upper respiratory infection, flu or flu-like symptoms
- Most fevers (unless you are convulsing or a young child has an extremely high temperature)
- Mild to moderate asthma attacks
- Urinary tract infections
- Diarrhea
- Insect bites
- General Wound Care

## Go to an emergency room for:



- Difficulty breathing, shortness of breath
- Chest or upper abdominal pain or pressure
- Fainting, sudden dizziness, weakness
- Confusion or changes in mental status
- Any sudden or severe pain
- Uncontrolled bleeding
- Severe or persistent vomiting or diarrhea
- Coughing or vomiting blood
- Suicidal feelings
- Difficulty speaking
- Unusual abdominal pain

## Call an ambulance when:



- Your condition is life-threatening
- Your condition could worsen and become life-threatening on the way to the hospital
- Moving can cause further damage
- You are unable to drive yourself or the patient
- If skills or equipment of emergency personnel is needed
- If the distance or traffic conditions could cause a delay in getting to the hospital