

Keeping your health and wellbeing in the know

MyHealthTALK

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Courtesy of Asset Health

Believe it or Not Flu Season is Just around the Corner

What is Influenza?

- Also known as “seasonal flu”, influenza is a serious and contagious respiratory illness that is caused by the influenza virus.
- Symptoms can range from mild to severe, sometimes leading to complications such as pneumonia, bronchitis, and ear infections.
- Some groups of people are at higher risk than others, including the elderly, young children, and people with certain conditions.

What happens if I get the flu?

- Chills are often the first indication that you’ve got the flu, and a fever of over 100°F is very common.
- You may experience headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat and muscle aches.
- Flu can leave some people feeling so weak and tired that they remain in bed for days.

Can I get the flu from the flu vaccine?

- The flu vaccine cannot cause the flu illness. The viruses in the vaccine are either killed (flu shot) or weakened (nasal spray) which means they cannot cause infection.
- Mild soreness at the spot where the shot was given may occur and is often caused by a person’s immune system making the protective antibodies which are what allow the body to fight against the flu.

What about people who get the seasonal flu vaccine and still get sick with flu-like symptoms?

- Some people may be exposed to an influenza virus shortly before having the vaccination or during the two-week period that it takes the body to gain protection after vaccination.
- People can become ill from other (non-flu) viruses that circulate during the flu season which may cause flu-like symptoms.
- A person may be exposed to an influenza virus that is not included in the seasonal flu vaccine. The flu shot protects against the 3 viruses that research suggests will be most common for that year. The 2011-2012 season vaccine includes protection against the swine flu virus.

When is the flu season and when should I have the flu vaccine?

- Winter is generally considered peak flu season with most outbreaks occurring in January and February. But sometimes, flu cases can peak as early as October-November or as late as May.
- Obtaining your flu vaccine as soon as it is available to help protect you from early outbreaks is recommended, but you can receive protection by being vaccinated even into December.

If you have any questions, concerns or allergies, always talk with a doctor before receiving the flu vaccine.

References: US Department of Health and Human Services/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month!



To learn more about breast cancer visit the American Cancer Society Awareness site:

<http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/BreastCancer>

Expecting trick-or-treaters or party guests?

- Provide healthier treats for trick-or-treaters, such as individual packs of raisins, trail mix, or pretzels. For party guests, offer a variety of fruits, vegetables, and cheeses.
- Use party games and trick-or-treat time as an opportunity for kids to get their daily dose of 60 minutes of physical activity.
- Be sure walking areas and stairs are well-lit and free of obstacles that could result in falls.
- Keep candle-lit jack-o’-lanterns and luminaries away from doorsteps, walkways, landings, and curtains. Place them on sturdy tables, keep them out of the reach of pets and small children, and never leave them unattended.
- Drive with caution.



Trick or Treat

Trick or treat! Give me something good to eat! Halloween is one of the most looked forward to holidays for children, but the repercussions can be quite scary. Although free candy is every child's dream, it can wreak havoc on their oral health.



Hard candy can cause broken, chipped and cracked teeth while chewy treats can get stuck between teeth and cause cavities. Cavities are the most common oral problems. They are holes that form in teeth caused by the mixture of germs, saliva and food particles all which form plaque. The plaque creates an acid that eats away at teeth causing cavities. 85% of people will have at least one cavity by adulthood.

Cavities can be prevented by maintaining good oral health. Plaque prevention can be achieved by brushing with fluoride toothpaste and flossing two times a day.

Dental hygiene is a habit that needs to be instilled while children are young. An oral health routine should be an important part of the day. Make it fun! Sing songs while your child brushes, this will lengthen the amount of time they spend brushing. Let them pick out their own fun toothbrush and toothpaste. There are many options available at your local store. Take small children with you to your cleanings so they get familiar with their future dentist and the procedures. Dentists recommend twice a year dental visits beginning at age two. It is also recommended that parent's help with teeth brushing up to the age of eight.

Make it a point this month to take some time to focus on teaching your children good oral habits for life while still enjoying candy and snacks in a responsible way.

The following are some tips for healthy teeth during Halloween and the upcoming Holiday Seasons:

- Think moderation. Set up a "treat time" and limit per day snacks to a reasonable amount. This gives kids something to look forward to without feeling deprived.
- Brush or rinse with water after snacking on sweet treats, potato chips and other carbohydrate snacks that create cavity causing acid in the mouth.
- Let kids pick out their top 10 favorite candies and donate, freeze or hide the rest. Some dentists even have a candy buy back program after Halloween to promote oral health.
- Remember it's not how much sugar is consumed; it's how often that affects tooth decay. Constant snacking means a continual attack on one's teeth.
- Think about giving out something other than candy to children on Halloween i.e. Stickers, pencils, erasers or little trinkets.
- Sour candy is the worst when it comes to tooth damage due to its high acid levels.
- Deciding together the amount and kinds of candy to keep teaches children that candy isn't bad if consumed responsibly.

Sources: WebMD / www.nocavitykids.com / www.dental-tribune.com

s

Swords, knives, and similar costume accessories should be short, soft, and flexible.

a

Avoid trick-or-treating alone. Walk in groups or with a trusted adult.

f

Fasten reflective tape to costumes and bags to help drivers see you.

e

Examine all treats for choking hazards and tampering before eating them.

h

Hold a flashlight while trick-or-treating to help you see and others see you.

a

Always test make-up in a small area first and remove it before bedtime to prevent skin and eye irritation.

l

Look both ways before crossing the street. Use established crosswalks wherever possible.

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Lower your risk for serious eye injury by not wearing decorative contact lenses.

o

Only walk on sidewalks or on the far edge of the road facing traffic to stay safe.

w

Wear well-fitting masks, costumes, and shoes to avoid blocked vision, trips, and falls.

e

Eat only factory-wrapped treats. Avoid eating homemade treats unless you know the cook well.

e

Enter homes only if you're with a trusted adult. Otherwise, stay outside.

n

Never walk near lit candles or luminaries. Be sure to wear flame-resistant costumes.

Reference: CDC Office of Women's Health

