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Wellness Works

OCTOBER 2014

Staying Safe and Healthy - What You Can Do!

Ebola may be dominating the news, but the risks of an outbreak in Oregon are minimal. The greater risk of serious illness and even death is from Influenza and other viruses.

Here are some tips to help you and your family to stay healthy and avoid the flu and other infectious diseases:

- Wash your hands frequently, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Cough and sneeze into your elbow or shoulder
- Stay home when you feel sick.

The Flu

Influenza – the flu - is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness. Serious outcomes of flu infection can result in hospitalization or death. Some people, such as older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions are at high risk for serious flu complications. Signs and symptoms include:

- Chills
- Sore throat
- Fatigue
- Headaches
- Body aches.

NURSE ADVICE LINES:

If you are covered by a CIS medical plan, you have access to a 24/7 Nurse Advice Line. Call anytime for assistance in managing an allergy, asthma, cold or virus condition.

Regence Advice 24: 800-267-6729

Kaiser Permanente: 503-813-2000
or 800-813-2000

503-763-3800 800-922-2684
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1212 Court St. NE, Salem, OR 97301



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Pertussis (whooping cough)

Commonly known as whooping cough, pertussis is a respiratory illness that is caused by the *Bordetella pertussis* bacteria. It is spread from person to person through the air. The first signs of pertussis are similar to a cold: sneezing, runny nose, fever, and cough. After a week or two the cough gets worse and occurs in sudden, uncontrollable bursts. After a coughing spell, a person may have a hard time breathing, appear blue in the face, and may vomit. The best way to protect against pertussis is **immunization**.

In addition to the basic tips to avoid infection, pertussis can be avoided by disinfecting commonly used or high-touch areas, like tables, counters and doorknobs.

Enterovirus D68

Enterovirus D68 (EV D68) also has been widely reported in the United States. People are more likely to get infected with Enterovirus in the summer and fall, and it is more likely in infants, children, teenagers, and people with weakened immune systems. EV-D68 can cause mild to severe respiratory symptoms. Children with asthma may have a higher risk for severe respiratory illness caused by EV-D68. Signs and symptoms of Enterovirus include runny nose, sneezing, cough, body aches and difficulty breathing. Use all of the tips above to avoid infection.

Norovirus

Norovirus is a very contagious virus of the gastrointestinal tract - sometimes referred to as the “stomach bug” - that can infect anyone. You can get it from an infected person, contaminated food or water, or by touching contaminated surfaces. The virus causes your stomach, intestines, or both to become inflamed. This leads you to have stomach pain, nausea, diarrhea, and vomiting. These symptoms can be serious for some people, especially young children and older adults. You can reduce the risk of getting Norovirus by following the tips above, and by:



*The best way to prevent the flu and pertussis is by getting **vaccinated**, and to avoid infection by following the tips on page one.*



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- Thoroughly rinsing fruits and vegetables
- Cooking shellfish thoroughly
- Cleaning surfaces and washing laundry frequently
- Don't prepare food or care for others if you are sick.

Remember, your primary care provider is always ready to answer questions, and your insurance providers also can help.

REGENCE MEMBERS

For Regence members, flu shots are a covered benefit. How they are covered depends on where you get your shot. Please refer to the immunization section of your benefit booklet to determine your flu shot coverage, or contact Regence Customer Service.

Please note that flu shots received at a non-contracted pharmacy or provider's office may require you to pay at the time of service. You may submit the receipt to Regence and the claim will be processed according to your plan benefits, where deductible or copay may apply.

Questions? Call the Customer Service number on the back of your card or go to the "contact us" link at www.regence.com.

KAISER MEMBERS

Employees and dependents insured by a Kaiser medical plan can also get a flu shot at no cost through the Nurse Treatment Center at any Kaiser location. For the most up-to-date Kaiser information, including vaccine availability, call 1-800-813-2000 (toll free), or visit www.kp.org.



In general, an annual flu shot is recommended. Check with your general practitioner to see when your pertussis vaccination was last administered and if it's time for a booster vaccine.

It's all about **TRUST.**

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