



Are You Ready?

OCTOBER 2006

WASHINGTON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

**PREVENT
INFLUENZA
—PREPARE
NOW**



Are You Ready?

Is a series of handouts designed to assist you and your family to plan ahead for emergencies.



For more information on Prevent Influenza—Prepare Now Check out these helpful websites:



www.washhealth.org



Washington County Emergency Services/ Emergency Management 33 W. Washington St. Hagerstown, MD 21740 240-313-2930



www.cdc.gov/flu



www.redcross.org

Prevent Influenza—Prepare Now

Influenza (“the flu”) kills about 36,000 people in the United States each year. Influenza also causes approximately 114,000 US hospitalizations. Influenza vaccination is the main way to prevent this potentially deadly disease and its complications.

In most people, influenza is contagious for up to 2 days before the onset of symptoms and until 5 days after the symptoms begin. That means influenza has 7 days to spread to anyone with whom the infected person comes into contact. Therefore, it is possible to give someone the flu before you know you are sick as well as while you are sick.

Cold vs. Influenza: What’s the difference?

Symptom	Cold	Influenza
fever	rare	usually 102° - 104° lasts 3 - 4 days
headache	rare	sudden onset severe
muscle aches	mild	usually and often severe
tiredness and weakness	mild	can last 2 or more weeks
extreme exhaustion	never	sudden onset severe
runny nose	often	sometimes
sneezing	often	sometimes
sore throat	often	sometimes
cough	mild, hacking cough	usually and can become severe

Protection Against The Flu

The single best way to protect yourself and others against the flu is to get a flu vaccination. The flu shot is an inactivated vaccine (contains killed virus). This vaccine is given in the arm with a needle. October or November is the best time to get vaccinated, but you can still get vaccinated in December or later. Flu season can begin as early as October and last as late as springtime.



Vaccine Side Effects (what to expect)

The viruses in the flu shot are killed (inactivated), so you cannot get the flu from a shot. Some minor side effects that could occur are:

- soreness, redness, and swelling where the shot was given
- fever (low grade)
- aches

If these problems occur, they begin soon after the shot and usually last 1-2 days. Almost all people who receive influenza vaccine have no serious problems from it.

The Following Additional Measures Can Help Protect Against The Flu

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Put your used tissue in the waste basket.
- Avoid close contact.
- If you get the flu stay home.
- Wash your hands often.
- Avoid touching your face (eyes, mouth, nose).



If you get the flu, get plenty of rest, drink a lot of liquids, and avoid using alcohol and tobacco. Also you can take medications such as acetaminophen to relieve the fever and muscle aches associated with the flu. **Never give aspirin to children or teenagers who have flu-like symptoms, particularly fever.**

An Ounce of Prevention

“Trick” Danger and “Treat” Your Child to a Safe Halloween

While minor stomach aches from eating too much candy may be the most common hazard on Halloween, emergency physicians warn they treat many children for serious injuries on this day that could have been prevented.

“The most common injuries on Halloween are eye injuries from sharp objects, burns from flammable costumes, and injuries from collisions with motor vehicles,” said Dr. Rick Blum, president of the American College of Emergency Physicians. “To ensure a safer Halloween, parents and caregivers should follow important safety measures.”

- Make sure you see all the candy BEFORE your child consumes it. Avoid candy not wrapped in its original wrapper, as well as all fruit.
- Make sure your child stays on the sidewalks as much as possible (off streets) and obeys all traffic signals.
- Discuss the importance of staying together in a group. Require at least one adult to serve as chaperone during candy gathering, and forbid children from accepting rides from strangers or visiting unfamiliar homes.
- Avoid costumes that could cause children to trip, such as baggy pants, long hems, high heels, and over-sized shoes.
- Avoid costume contact lenses.
- Avoid masks, but if your child must wear one, make sure it is well ventilated and does not impair his or her vision.
- Make sure that costume fabric, wigs, and beards are made of flame-resistant materials, such as nylon or polyester.
- Make sure that costumes are visible at night; avoid dark colors. Add reflective tape to the costume to help make your child more visible to motor vehicles.
- Check that accessories such as swords, knives, wands and other pointed objects are made from flexible materials and have dulled edges.
- For more Trick or Treat Safety visit: www.redcross.org/services/hss/tips/october/octtips.html

