

# Alliance

# Handshake

JANUARY 2014

All of us at Alliance Home Health Care, Inc. and Alliance Personal Care, Inc. want to wish each of you a happy, prosperous, and healthy New Year.

As temperatures continue to drop, we all need to remember that Cold and Flu season is upon us. Luckily, you can protect yourself from contracting a virus that could leave you sneezing, aching and feeling awful.

Viruses cause both colds and the flu. These viruses can easily spread from someone who is sick to another person. You can protect yourself by getting a flu shot and by practicing good health habits, including avoiding close contact with people who are sick; staying home when you are sick; avoiding touching your eyes, nose and mouth; and washing your hands often. You should also cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing – use a tissue or the crook of your arm.

-William Van Ry

## AVOID BEING SIDELINED THIS COLD AND FLU SEASON

The common cold and the flu are both contagious viral infections of the respiratory tract. Although the symptoms can be similar, the flu is much worse. A cold may drag you down, but the flu can make you shudder at the at the very thought of getting out of bed.

### Memory Game



It is very important to exercise the mind as well as the body. With each edition of our newsletter, we will include a memory word game for you to complete.

### Word Game



Last issues word: **VENDIBLE**

veil	vine	evil	devein	bedevil
vein	edible	need	devil	been
veld	elide	neve	diel	belie
vend	endive	dele	dine	bend
vied	envied	deli	dive	bevel
vile	even	delve	idle	bide
bile	bind	bine	bled	bleed
blend	blende	blind	lend	levied
lied	lien	line	live	liven

The average is 34 words. Did you meet or beat this standard?

Can you find 47 words in next issues word **HYPNOTIC**?

Congestion, sore throat, and sneezing are common with colds. Both cold and flu bring coughing, headache, chest discomfort. With the flu, though you are likely to run a high fever for several days and have body aches, fatigue, and weakness. Symptoms of the flu also tend to come on abruptly. Usually, complications from colds are relatively minor, but a severe case of the flu can lead to a life threatening illness such as pneumonia.

The flu can share many of the same symptoms as a cold, but you can tell the difference. Cold symptoms develop suddenly and include: Fever up to 102 degrees, sore throat, cough, runny or stuffy nose, sneezing, fatigue, muscle aches, headache and watery eyes. Flu symptoms often appear suddenly and include: Fever over 102 degrees, stuffy nose, nausea, chills, sweating, fatigue, muscle aches, cough, headache and loss of appetite.

Call your doctor if you have a prolonged fever over 102 degrees with fatigue and body aches, symptoms that last longer than 10 days, trouble breathing, shortness of breath, pain or pressure in your chest, feeling faint, confusion, severe vomiting, severe sinus pain, or very swollen glands of the neck or jaw.

Since both a cold and the flu are viral, antibiotics cannot conquer a cold or the flu. Remember: Antibiotics only treat bacterial infections.

You can help ease your symptoms by resting and drinking lots of fluids. Ease a sore throat by gargling with warm salt water or by using throat sprays or lozenges. Over the counter medicines also can help your symptoms.

Analgesics (acetaminophen, ibuprofen) relieve aches and can lower a fever. Cough suppressants, expectorants and decongestants can also help. A doctor may prescribe an antiviral medication. These drugs may help reduce the severity and the duration of the flu and are best used within the first 48 hours of the appearance of flu symptoms.

While anyone can get the flu, infants, the elderly, pregnant women, and people with chronic ailments such as diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, and HIV are at the highest risk for flu complications. Despite advances in flu preventions and treatment, the CDC estimates that deaths related to influenza range from 3,000 to 49,000 deaths in the United States per year.

The CDC urges you to take the following actions to protect yourself from the flu:

- Take time to get a flu vaccine.
  - The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses.
  - Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine as soon as the current season's vaccines are available.
- Take everyday preventive actions to stop the spread of germs.
  - Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
  - If you are sick with flu-like symptoms, stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone except to get medical care or for other necessities.

- While sick, limit contact with other as much as possible to keep from infecting them.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs.
- Take flu antiviral drugs, if your doctor prescribes them.
  - If you get the flu, antiviral drugs can treat your illness.
  - Antiviral drugs can make the illness milder and shorten the time you are sick. They may also prevent serious flu complications.
  - Studies show that flu antiviral drugs work best for treatment when they are started within 2 days of getting sick.

Following these simple steps can help you navigate through the cold and flu season.

## Winter Safety Tips for Older Adults

When the temperature drops, older adults run a higher risk of health problems and injuries related to the weather, including hypothermia, frostbite, and falls in ice and snow. It's important that they, and those who

care for them, take certain precautions at this time of year. Here's what you need to know.

## Hypothermia

Older adults tend to produce less body heat than younger people, and it's harder for them to tell when the temperature is too low. This can be dangerous because when your body is in the cold for too long, it begins to lose heat quickly. The result can be hypothermia, a dangerous drop in body temperature.

**Know the Warning Signs of hypothermia:** lots of shivering; cold skin that is pale or ashy; feeling very tired, confused and sleepy; feeling weak; problems walking; slowed breathing or heart rate. Call 911 if you think you or someone else has hypothermia.

**Note: Do not rely on shivering alone as a warning sign, since older people tend to shiver less or not at all as their body temperature drops.**

**Stay Indoors** when it's very cold outside, especially if it's also very windy. Keep indoor temperatures at about 65 degrees. If you have to go outside, don't stay out for very long, and go indoors if you start shivering.

**Stay Dry** Wet clothing chills your body quickly

**Wear Layers** Wearing two or three thinner layers of loose-fitting clothing is warmer than a single layer of thick clothing. Always wear layers, as well as:

- a hat
- gloves or mittens (mittens are warmer)
- a coat and boots
- a scarf to cover your mouth and nose and protect your lungs from cold air

## Frostbite

Extreme cold can cause frostbite-damage to the skin that can go all the way down to the bone. Frostbite usually affects the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers and toes. In severe cases, frostbite can result in loss of limbs. People with heart disease and other circulation problems are more likely to get frostbite.

**Cover Up** all parts of your body when you go outside. If your skin turns red or dark or starts hurting, go inside right away.

**Know the Warning Signs of frostbite:** skin that's white or ashy (for people with darker skin) or grayish-yellow; skin that feels hard or waxy; numbness. If you think you or someone else has frostbite, call for medical help immediately. A person with frostbite may also have hypothermia, so check for those symptoms, too.

**If Frostbite Occurs** place frostbitten parts of your body in warm (not hot) water.



**Alliance**