

Alliance

Handshake

January 2013

HAPPY NEW YEAR! The office staff of Alliance Home Health Care, Inc. and Alliance Personal Care, Inc. hope that 2013 will be a year of health, hope, and prosperity for each of you.

We are all aware that the healthcare industry is under a major public microscope as the Affordable Care Act begins its implementation phase. Both Missouri and Kansas are implementing changes to their HCBS (Medicaid) programs. 2013 poses challenges for all of us. Success will be determined by how these challenges are addressed.

We at Alliance are focused on addressing the challenges as we continue to provide “quality care with a personal touch”.

-William Van Ry

TOP THREE REASONS TO GET A FLU SHOT

1. **PREVENTS DEATH.** Each year over 20,000 people in the United States die because of the flu – most are over 65 years of age. More people die from the flu than any other vaccine preventable disease.
2. **PREVENTS SEVERE ILLNESS.** The flu puts about 114,000 people in the hospital each year in the United States. Children younger than two years old are as likely to be hospitalized as those over 65 years of age.
3. **PROTECTS OTHER PEOPLE.** People who live with or care for others who are at a high risk of serious illness from the flu need a flu shot. They can give the flu to those for whom they care if they get the flu.

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: **CORRECTLY**

celt	cycle	tore	cero
cyclor	torr	clot	recto
toyer	cloy	rector	trey
cole	rectory	troy	colt
rely	tyro	core	retro
lector	corer	role	lore
correct	rote	lorry	cote
terry	lyre	coyer	tole
yore			

The average is 26 words. Did you meet or beat this standard?

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

TAKE PRECAUTIONS THIS COLD AND FLU SEASON

As the temperatures hover around freezing and snow covers the ground, remember that these are signs of the Cold and Flu season. It is important to take precautions that 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 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.

Influenza, commonly known as the flu, is a contagious respiratory disease caused by the influenza virus. The virus attacks cells in the upper respiratory tract, including those in the nose, throat, bronchi, and lungs.

The flu typically comes on hard and fast. It is characterized by high fever, chills, fatigue, body aches, sore throat, and a dry cough. These symptoms are similar to the common cold.

FLU SYMPTOMS

Flu symptoms will show up anywhere from one to four days after infection. They often appear suddenly and can be quite severe. Flu symptoms generally last one to two weeks before subsiding.

The most common symptoms of the flu are:

- High fever (103 degrees F to 104 degrees F in adults).
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Body and muscle aches

- Loss of appetite
- Headache
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Stuffy nose.

While most symptoms will taper off one or two weeks after onset, a dry cough and general fatigue can last for several weeks.

Other possible symptoms of the flu include dizziness, sneezing, and wheezing. Nausea and vomiting are NOT common symptoms in adults.

Pneumonia is a common complication of the flu. You should visit an emergency room immediately if you have symptoms of pneumonia, including:

- A severe cough with large amounts of phlegm
- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Fever higher than 104 degrees F
- Acute chest pains
- Severe chills.

HOW THE FLU SPREADS

The flu virus spreads by leaving an infected person's body in droplets whenever that person coughs, sneezes, or puts their mouth on another object. If you are in close contact with an infected person, you may end up inhaling infected droplets immediately, but you can also pick up the virus later from touching an infected object like a door handle or a pencil, and then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

This is why it is essential to maintain vigorous personal hygiene, especially during flu season. Simple steps like using antibacterial liquid to clean your hands after getting off a bus, or washing your hands extra carefully before eating, can go a long way in avoiding the flu and preventing its spread.

AVOIDING THE FLU

For many people, vigorous personal hygiene may be enough to avoid the flu. For those at high risk, the flu vaccine is essential in providing protection against yearly flu outbreaks.

Getting a yearly flu shot is the easiest and most reliable method to avoid contracting the flu. It has been estimated that 70 to 90 percent of all illnesses caused by the flu could be prevented with proper vaccination.

Because flu viruses are constantly evolving, new flu vaccines must be formulated every year to keep up with the changes. Researchers first identify the three strains that seem most likely to be active in the upcoming flu season. Manufacturers then produce a vaccine with a mix of inactive or weakened strains that match the three active strains as closely as possible.

When there is a good match between the vaccine and that year's actual strains, the vaccine can be 70 to 90 percent effective in preventing illness.

Everyone who is eligible should get vaccinated. When supplies of vaccine are low, it is usually recommended that high-risk groups be vaccinated. These groups include:

- Adults 65 and older
- Individuals in nursing homes or chronic-care facilities
- Persons with diabetes or heart, lung, kidney, liver, blood, or metabolic diseases
- Pregnant women
- Health-care workers and caregivers
- Individuals with weakened immune systems
- Children 18 and under who are on long-term aspirin therapy
- Morbidly obese people (those who have a body mass index higher than 30)

- Family members of any of the above groups

Once a vaccine is administered, it typically takes up to two weeks for the body to build up full immunity. Adults should receive a single dose of vaccine at least a few weeks before the onset of flu season. Even if you didn't get a flu shot prior to the start of flu season, you can still get vaccinated throughout flu season to minimize your chances of infection.

Serious side effects from the flu vaccine are very rare. Inactive viruses cannot cause the flu. The most common side effect of the flu shot is soreness at the site of the injection.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

The influenza virus spreads when people inhale the virus on the fine droplets given off when others sneeze, cough, or even talk. The virus can also spread when you touch an infected surface like a doorknob or light switch and then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. Apart from getting vaccinated, there are many additional ways to reduce your chances of contracting the flu.

The best thing you can do is WASH YOUR HANDS FREQUENTLY with soap and water and avoid touching your face with your hands. If soap and water aren't readily available, an alcohol-based sanitizer can be just as effective. Wash your hands after eating, using the restroom, handling dirty laundry, or cleaning dirty dishes and eating utensils.

If the flu hits your family, avoid contact with people who are clearly infected or sick. Avoid large crowds and enclosed spaces. If you are in a high-risk group and you have to go out during a flu epidemic, use a respirator mask to minimize your chances of inhaling the virus.

If you come down with the flu, cover your mouth with a tissue when coughing or

sneezing and throw dirty tissues away immediately. If you don't have a tissue, cough into your elbow, not your hand. Wash your hands frequently and stay home until your fever is gone. Avoid other people as much as possible. If you have to go out, wear a mask to protect others.

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 can also help your symptoms. Analgesics (acetaminophen, ibuprofen) relieve aches and can lower a fever. Cough suppressants, expectorants and decongestants can also help.

Food Focus

Spinach

It worked for Popeye.

Help keep your immune system healthy by bolstering your diet with spinach. It is a great source of vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E and zinc. The academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends that you get the most out of spinach by using it fresh or frozen. Add it to soups, sandwiches, tomato sauce or your salad.



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