

Science club takes on topic of global warming

Sisters Science Club will host three free symposia on the topic of global warming this winter and spring.

On Tuesday, January 20, the speaker series at The Belfry welcomes nuclear engineer Mike Cappiello, who will talk about what is being done to develop technologies to deal with the impacts and costs of global warming.

Constance I. Millar, PhD, senior research ecologist with the Forest Service, will discuss the effects of historic climate change on subalpine meadows and forests in a talk on February 17.

Later on, on April 21, chemical engineer Sam Davis will address the question "Gas Shortages: Reality or Myth?"

For each event, doors open at 6 p.m. for food and beverage and the program kicks off at 7 p.m.

"Climate change is here, scientifically, but there's controversy about it," said Sisters Science Club co-founder Bob Collins. "So we thought, why don't we just bring this to the public ear?"

Collins noted that skeptics are more than welcome to bring their questions for a question-and-answer period.

"The speakers love that," he said.

The Belfry is located at 302 E. Main Ave. in Sisters.

Sisters getting sick, but mostly not with flu

By Jim Cornelius
News Editor

Something is going around in Sisters Country that feels an awful lot like the flu — but in most cases it's not.

Healthcare providers in the area report many cases coming in with sore throats, fevers, aches and pains, sometimes accompanied by stomach upset. But when tested for influenza, most of these patients are coming up negative.

That's good news in the sense that this season's flu in other parts of the country has been pretty severe, and in some cases deadly. And though it's been widely reported that the flu shot is less effective than hoped against this year's strain, Sisters healthcare providers universally urge people to get one anyway. Local clinics have the vaccine available.

"They predicted the right strain, but the strain from last year mutated and you can't predict mutation," said Dr. Soni Andreini of St. Charles Family Care.

The vaccine still offers some protection.

“If you're playing the odds, you're still better off getting the flu shot.”
— Dr. Andreini

"If you're playing the odds, you're still better off getting the flu shot," Dr. Andreini said.

Dr. Eric Wattenburg of Your Care in Redmond notes

that protection from the flu shot "should knock the symptoms down, even if it doesn't prevent the flu."

He also notes that there tends to be two peaks to flu season, so it's still timely to try to ward it off in that second surge.

Dr. May Fan of Bend Memorial Clinic in Sisters reported that, as of last week, the clinic had sent 62 samples to the lab and come back with 11 testing positive for Influenza A.

"What that says is there's a lot of people who have flu-like illness (that is not the flu)," she said.

That's consistent with other clinics, though Your Care in Redmond is reporting that their testing is "about 50/50."

Dr. Wattenburg of Your Care says he's seeing "flu and something else that looks like flu but it keeps testing negative. About a week before Christmas, it started showing up in earnest."

That, of course, makes for ripe conditions for contagion: Lots of people traveling and spending the holiday season in close proximity, spreading Christmas cheer — and germs.

Kids are the culprits in spreading the flu virus, because they're contagious long before they show symptoms.

"The kids are the ones who generally get the flu and spread it," said Dr. Fan. "So it helps if the kids are immunized."

Dr. Fan reported data saying that children can be contagious for as many as six days before onset of

symptoms and for as long as 10 days after symptoms dissipate. By contrast, adults are usually contagious for just a day before they get laid low.

Avoiding spreading the flu is a simple matter of staying away from others.

Dr. Eden Miller of High Lakes Health Care is "reminding people not to go to work when you have a fever."

That's better for your recovery and considerate of your co-workers who don't want what you're giving.

Dr. Miller also urges people to see their healthcare provider as soon as they start showing symptoms. That gives anti-viral medications like Tamiflu a chance to cut back the length of time you're down.

"The longer you wait, the less likely the medication will work," she said.

Dr. Andreini does not much favor the use of anti-viral medications, which can sometimes have side-effects like nausea and vomiting.

"We still offer it for people who are at high risk for complications if they get the flu," she said. "If I had the flu, I don't know if I would take it. I don't know if it's worth it for most people."

Speaking of nausea and

vomiting... The real-deal flu doesn't cause those unpleasant symptoms.

"A lot of people refer to the stomach flu, but that's a misnomer," said Dr. Fan.

Whatever the bug is that people think is the flu is producing those nasty symptoms, however.

"We're seeing some gastroenteritis, some nausea and vomiting with that one," said Dr. Wattenburg.

“The kids are the ones who generally get the flu and spread it. So it helps if the kids are immunized.”
— Dr. May Fan

You can increase your odds of avoiding the flu — or a bug that looks like it — by employing good health practices. Wash your hands thoroughly and often, using hot, soapy water. Avoid touching your eyes and mouth. Get plenty of rest and eat right to help keep your immune system firing on all cylinders, and, obviously, avoid contact with people you know are sick.

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