



## What You Should Know About the Flu

### What is the Flu?

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent it is to get a flu vaccine each fall.

Every year in the United States, on average:

- 5 percent to 20 percent of the population gets the flu
- More than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu complications
- 36,000 people die from the flu

Some people are at high risk for serious flu complications, such as older people, young children, and people with certain health conditions.

### Symptoms, Complications

Symptoms of the flu include:

- Fever (usually high)
- Headache
- Extreme tiredness
- Dry cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose

- Muscle aches
- Gastro-intestinal symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, are much more common in children than adults

Some complications caused by the flu include bacterial pneumonia, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes. Children may get sinus problems and ear infections.

### How It Spreads

The flu spreads in respiratory droplets caused by coughing and sneezing. It usually spreads from person to person, although occasionally a person may become infected by touching something with the virus on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

Adults may be able to infect others beginning one day before getting symptoms and up to seven days after getting sick. This means that you can give someone the flu before you know you are sick as well as while you are sick.

### What You Can Do

Stop the spread of germs that make you and others sick. Serious respiratory illnesses like influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), whooping cough, and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) are spread by:

- Coughing or sneezing
- Unclean hands

To help stop the spread of germs, you should:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- Put your used tissue in the wastebasket.

Clean your hands after coughing or sneezing by:

- Washing with soap and water; or
- Cleaning with alcohol-based hand cleaner.

Note: You may be asked to put on a surgical mask to protect others.

### Siletz Clinic Flu Shots

We have received a **limited** supply of flu vaccine. If you or your family members are **high risk**, please:

1. Schedule an appointment with your provider
2. Schedule an appointment with a nurse
3. Walk-ins from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. or 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. **only**

### High-Risk Groups

- All children age 6 to 23 months
- Adults age 65 and older
- Persons age 2 to 64 with underlying chronic medical conditions, i.e., heart/lung disease, asthma, diabetes, cancer, hepatitis on interferon
- All women who will be pregnant during the flu season
- Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
- Children age 6 months to 18 years on chronic aspirin therapy
- Health care workers with direct patient care
- Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children up to 6 months old

## Having Guests Who Smoke?

Holiday celebrations are just around the corner. Here are some suggestions to let your friends and family know, without seeming rude or judgmental, that you don't allow smoking in your home.

First, remember that you should not be embarrassed about wanting to protect your family. Second, keep in mind that most smokers know that tobacco is bad for health and if asked, will put out their cigarette.

- A "Smoke Free Home" decal at your front door will let a smoker know your feelings before they even enter your home.
- If a guest starts to light up or asks for an ashtray, speak to them without causing a distraction. Letting



your guest know that you understand his or her feelings will go a long way toward keeping everyone from getting angry or upset. You can say something like, "I know it's hard when you don't smoke, but I know you care about our health. I'd like to ask you to smoke outside. I don't want to hurt your feelings, but this is really important."

- Let your guests know about your smoke-free home policy when you extend your invitations.

To get a "Take it Outside" or "We Live in a Smoke-Free Home" decal for your home or car, call DeAnna Pearl at the Siletz Clinic, 541-444-9659 or 1-800-648-0449, ext. 1659.

## Free Quit Kits Available at Clinic

### 2005 New Year's Resolution to Quit Smoking?

Kits are available to those who want to quit smoking in the new year. The kits include mints, gum, finger toys, stickers, stamps, and information on how to quit and stay smoke-free.

Ask a nurse or contact DeAnna Pearl at 1-800-648-0449, ext. 1659, or 541-444-9659; or e-mail siletztobacco@ctsi.nsn.us for a free Quit Kit.