

OUR VIEW

Flu's toll largely preventable

The latest coronavirus to take hold in China has killed more than 100 to date and prompted the Chinese government to attempt to isolate more than 50 million of its people in an attempt to stop its spread.

In the U.S., meanwhile, this year's influenza strains have already killed more than 8,200 Americans, according to the Centers for Disease Control, including at least 54 children. And while scientists have yet to find a vaccine against the coronavirus, the same is not true of the flu.

Problem is, too few Americans are actually getting the flu shots that, while not 100% effective, are well worth the poke in the arm. That's because an immunization's rate of effectiveness measures only how many cases of a specific disease it actually prevents. Thus, three doses of the polio vaccine are 99% to 100% effective, according to CDC, while two doses of the measles, mumps and



AP Photo/David Goldman, File

In the U.S., this year's influenza strains have already killed more than 8,200 Americans, according to the Centers for Disease Control, including at least 54 children. And while scientists have yet to find a vaccine against the coronavirus, the same is not true of the flu.

rubella vaccine are well over 90% effective against measles and rubella, and about 88% effective against mumps.

Flu shots are less effective at preventing the disease altogether. Flu mutates quickly, and one year's flu may be nothing like what was going

around a year earlier.

But even if this year's flu shot doesn't precisely target this year's flu, it's still worthwhile. A mismatched flu shot can work to keep an individual from getting as sick as he or she would have had they gotten no flu shot at all.

Yet, most American adults fail to get their annual flu shots, even though they're generally free, part of required preventative coverage under the Affordable Care Act. Fewer than 50% of adults in this country have had their flu shots, and while more children — about 62% — have been vaccinated, that still leaves millions with no protection at all.

Flu shots are still available in Eastern Oregon at doctor's offices, pharmacies and at county public health clinics. Their cost is covered by private insurance, Medicare and the Oregon Health Plan. If you've skipped this particular part of your health routine until now, don't put it off any longer.

OTHER VIEWS

Beware of election misinformation

Welcome to 2020. You may be aware we have a major election coming up this year.

In Oregon, elections happen all the time. But every four years — with high-profile posts like the president of the United States up for grabs — people collectively turn their attention to election systems.

The security of these systems is an important topic and one that often seems to grab the most attention. But did you know that misinformation is actually the biggest threat to elections?

That's why the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's Office is working hard to provide more frequent information. Our goal is to educate voters and combat misinformation about elections so that Oregon voters feel confident their vote will be counted.

Election misinformation can be anything from rumors to misleading photos to more sinister campaigns with the goal of suppressing voter turnout. Misinformation can influence your thinking about a political campaign or outright lie to you about the status of your voter information. And it can be found from a diverse array of sources — social media, email lists, text message chains, even mailers.

With unlimited sources of information at our disposal, it can be challenging to find information that is accurate and trustworthy. Fortunately, there are some simple questions you can ask yourself to help identify misinformation:

- Is there any data or evidence presented to support the information?
- Does this information seem designed to push my political buttons?
- Is there something about this information that doesn't seem right or too bizarre to be true?

- Who is sharing this information?
- Does this individual or group have an agenda?

One particular risk to voters comes from groups — some well-intentioned, others not — with websites offering to register you to vote or offering other election information. The safest website to register and get official election information is that of the Oregon Elections Division — OregonVotes.gov.

There, you'll find official information about all Oregon elections, as well as answers to

most of your questions about elections. You can register to vote, check your registration status, check or change your political party, find an official ballot drop-box, track your ballot, see who is running for office, and see who is giving them money. You can also

learn about election processes, see elections laws and historical data.

We're proud that Oregonians have confidence in our voting system. In 2019, we conducted a poll that found Oregonians overwhelmingly have a positive experience with our vote-by-mail system. Only 3% said they had problems marking or completing their ballots and only 4% had problems receiving their ballot.

You, the informed voter, are the best defense we have against attacks on our democracy. Don't be fooled by misinformation. Know the official source — OregonVotes.gov — and remember that Oregon elections have never been more accurate or secure. You can be confident your vote counts.

Steve Trout is the director of the Oregon Elections Division of the Secretary of State. The Elections Division oversees state elections, ensuring that voting reflects the will of the people.



STEVE
TROUT
COMMENT

YOUR VIEWS

Trump supporters are hypocrites

The oblivious hypocrisy of Trump supporters is staggering. They are rabid for Biden to be investigated, including their full support of pressuring and blackmailing another country to do it for them, but give zero consideration to the blatant conflicts of interest and nepotism occurring in real time by their hero.

The Trump family profits immensely from the rotating carousel of foreign dignitaries hoping to gain favor by our president, while spending hundreds of thousands of dollars at Trump family

properties. Ivanka has received numerous trademarks from China, including one for voting machines, during our volatile trade negotiations. Our taxpayer dollars have been used for military spending of over \$11 million for gas and accommodations at his Scottish luxury resort, including an unnecessary stop made by the Air National Guard in the middle of a routine trip from the U.S. to Kuwait. Where is the outrage?

His supporters rally around the economy being so great, but who here in Grants Pass is making more money, paying less taxes, less on health care, less

for food and housing, or actually living a better life since he took office?

I surely am not.

If the Bidens are suspect of violating any laws, I fully support the investigation ... by United States investigators. No investigation has been initiated by our attorney general. I also fully support the same investigations into the Trump family conflicts.

Why don't his supporters see Trump's violations as anything but the same as what the Bidens are accused of?

Blind hypocrisy.

Geri Ventura
Grants Pass

CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

U.S. SENATORS

Ron Wyden

221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-5244
La Grande office: 541-962-7691

Jeff Merkley

313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-3753
Pendleton office: 541-278-1129

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE

Greg Walden

185 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-6730
La Grande office: 541-624-2400

REPRESENTATIVES

Greg Barreto, District 58

900 Court St. NE, H-38
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1458
Rep.GregBarreto@state.or.us

Greg Smith, District 57

900 Court St. NE, H-482
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1457
Rep.GregSmith@state.or.us

SENATOR

Bill Hansell, District 29

900 Court St. NE, S-423
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1729
Sen.BillHansell@state.or.us