

Women's Resource Center opens Starting Over Store in St. Helens

A resale store called Starting Over Store (SOS), has been opened by the Columbia County Women's Resource Center. Store hours are Wednesday through Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Donations are accepted at the store Wednesday through Friday from noon to 5:00 p.m. and on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. All donated items should be clean and in good working order. Questions about donations can be answered by calling the store at 503-366-0325 during open hours. SOS is located in the old TVBS building, 164 Little St, St. Helens.

Proceeds from SOS will benefit clients of the Women's Resource Center and its shelter, The Starting Place. SOS will also offer various services to people in the community including a job training program, a life skills program, Dressed 4 Success (call for information), and Hispanic outreach every Thursday with "El Dia de Fiesta," as well as information and referrals.

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Health Notes

By Audeen Wagner



FLU SHOTS

No doubt you've heard about the flu vaccine shortage this year. Many people are asking about how the crisis will affect their ability to ward off influenza.

The clinic has been advised that there will be NO

flu vaccine available locally this year, even for the high-risk groups who are advised to have the immunization every year. So, what to do, given this information?

First, be aware of the symptoms of the flu. How do you know if you are coming down with the flu or just a bad cold? The key thing to watch for is sudden onset: a cold is slower developing and less severe, flu usually hits you in a hurry!

Here are the symptoms:

- Fever, usually high
- Muscle aches
- Headache
- Gastro-intestinal symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhea (much more common in children than adults)
- Extreme tiredness
- Dry cough, sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose

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

So, in lieu of the flu shot, there are some important things to know about prevention. It is quite simple, really, but takes some effort to be consistent. Here are some tips from the Center for Disease Control:

1. Avoid close contact. Try to avoid contact with people who are sick.
2. Stay home when you are sick. Staying

home from work, school and errands will prevent spreading of the flu.

3. Cover your mouth and nose. When coughing or sneezing, you can prevent the virus from spreading, by covering your nose and mouth. This simple courtesy can prevent those around you from getting sick.

4. Wash your hands. Be especially diligent about this one: Wash your hands often with soap and water. In public places there are so many areas you might touch that have been exposed to the flu virus, and a thorough washing of hands can protect you. Also, there are many over-the-counter products that you can carry along with you that are applied to your skin and rubbed in that sanitize your skin without water, pretty handy, huh? The clinic uses one called Purell, and there are others available over the counter. You can also carry those little alcohol wipes along with you; they are convenient and do the same job.

5. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. This is hard to do, but a great habit to work on. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches the face.

Also, many people are altering their lifestyle somewhat to avoid coming down with the flu. A healthy diet, getting proper rest, taking vitamins, especially vitamin C (be sure to follow the directions!), and avoiding stress.

These hygiene tips are important for all ages, and are good habits to develop throughout the year; and, of course, imperative this time of year if we are to control that flu bug.

"The bottom line," says Office Manager Cathy Rozinek, R.N., "is to recognize the symptoms and preventive measures; be informed, but don't panic is the best advice."

If you can find a source for the flu shot elsewhere, Cathy says, go ahead and take advantage of the opportunity, especially if you are in the risk groups: All children 6-23 months, adults over 65, people with underlying chronic medical conditions, pregnant women, healthcare workers and others involved in direct patient care. If you do get a flu shot, be sure to call your provider's office and let them know the date you got the vaccine. This will keep your medical records up to date.

Before we know it, winter will be over, spring will be on the way, and the dreaded "flu season" a thing of the past. Take care of yourself!

Mammogram schedule: The next visit of the Mammo-van to Vernonia will be on December 8, 2004. Call 429-9191 to schedule.

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