

Flu shots at Washington County clinic

The Essential Health Clinic and the Washington County Department of Health and Human Services will be offering flu vaccine for \$15 on Saturday, October 29 from 9:00 a.m. to noon at the Hillsboro Public Health Clinic at 155 N. First Avenue.

A total of 400 vaccine doses will be available to the public. The clinic will be staffed by vol-

unteers from the Essential Health Clinic, a local, non-profit clinic that provides urgent medical care, medical advice and referrals to people with out access to medical care in Washington County. All of the \$15 administration fee will be donated to the Essential Health Clinic. The Washington County Department of Health and Human Services is donating the use of

its facility and the vaccine.

Vaccine will be provided to individuals 12 years of age and older. Since the cost is considered a donation and is tax deductible, no insurance billing information will be provided.

For more information about the Essential Health Clinic, call 503/846-4919 or visit our website at <www.co.washington.or.us/essential> .

Dogs can get the flu, too

A case of canine influenza, dog flu, was confirmed in the Portland area. Dog flu is a new, highly contagious and potentially deadly virus that causes respiratory infection. It is believed to have jumped species from horses to racing dogs in Florida and has been spreading in kennels and racetracks throughout the United States.

The symptoms can look like the common "kennel cough," because coughing is the most common symptom. However, dogs with canine influenza are usually sick for longer periods (several weeks), are more likely to have a fever and nasal discharge, and to develop pneumonia. Most dogs develop a milder form of the disease, but some require hospitalization and intensive care. The fatality rate is about one to five percent.

Call your veterinarian if your dog develops a cough. In addition, if your dog is coughing, do not take it out to locations where it might infect other dogs. Keep your dog home until it is well, or as directed by your veterinarian. Wash your hands well after handling any sick dog before touching another dog.

There is no vaccine against canine influenza although veterinary researchers are working on developing one. The Bordetella (kennel cough) vaccine does not protect dogs against the flu.

People cannot catch dog flu. Horses, cats, and other animals are not at risk either.

Consult with your veterinarian or go to <www.vet.cornell.edu/news/dogflu> for more information.

Panel to speak about Diabetes, public welcome

Diabetes is a silent disease that afflicts 17 million people in the U.S., many of whom don't know they have it. It affects blood vessels throughout the body, and, over time, creates dysfunction in many organs, including the eyes, kidneys and feet. It may also lead to heart disease and stroke.

While there is still no cure for diabetes, people with the disease can prevent or delay serious health problems by understanding their condition, seeking medical care, and learning to make healthy lifestyle choices.

A panel of experts will be at Tuality Health Education Center on Saturday, October 29, from 9:00 a.m. to noon to discuss medications, nutritional supplements, and other questions. There will also be informational booths in the lobby. No registration is required for this free event.

Tuality Health Education Center is located at 334 SE 8th Avenue in Hillsboro.

Health Notes

By Audeen Wagner



Flu Shots. Flu season is approaching fast. Hopefully, by the time you read this, the vaccine will be available. It is still questionable how much vaccine the local clinic will receive for their patients, but Cathy Rozinek, Clinic Manager in Vernonia, assures us that the shortage (if any) won't be nearly as serious as last year. However, there are still some uncertainties, so it is wise to look elsewhere if possible, especially those in the "at risk" category (see below).

Flu shots will be available at special clinics set up in pharmacies, churches, grocery stores, and other locations around the area. There are two locations in Columbia County: Sentry Market in Vernonia will have a flu shot clinic on Sunday, November 6, from noon to 6:00 p.m. The other location is the Red Apple Market in St. Helens, on Saturday, November 12. Cathy says if anyone has information on where they can get a shot, go ahead. "Because there is more testing of vaccines this year before they are released, we may see some short supplies and delay," she said. A place to check for flu shot clinics is <getaflushot.com>. They are listed by county.

If clinic patients do get their shots elsewhere, the clinic staff would appreciate a call letting them know, so that they can document patient records.

The vaccine will be given first, again this year, to those most at risk or most vulnerable. This includes people:

- over the age of 65;
- people with medical conditions and chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, AIDS or heart disease;
- infants 6 months to two years;
- nursing home residents;
- adults working with the public, such as teachers and health care personnel;
- and this year the Center for Disease Control even lists all those over 6 months old who were "displaced by a hurricane and currently living in crowded group settings, such as shelters."

There are other risk groups, also, so check with your caregiver if you think you are in one of those categories.

What to expect with your flu shot? A common misconception of flu shots is that they could give you the flu. This is not true. There are occasionally side effects of the flu, such as soreness, redness or swelling, low grade fever, and some achiness, which are usually minor and last only a day or two. Flu vaccination can cause severe allergic reactions, but this is extremely rare.

The cost of flu shots varies, but seems to be around \$25. Some insurances and Medicare cover part or all of the cost.

Clinic patients who need flu shots should contact the Vernonia clinic for availability. Or, get your shot elsewhere, if possible, then let the clinic know.

(Special thanks to Tory Wagner, who helped research and write this article.)

Mammovan Schedule: The Tuality Mammovan will be in Vernonia on Wednesday, November 16. Call the clinic at 503-429-9191 to schedule an appointment.

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Sunday 8 a.m - 7 p.m. *Closed Monday*



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