

Health Notes

By Audeen Wagner



Flu Shot Update: Providence-Vernonia Clinic is now offering flu shots to their patients, and for the past couple of weeks or more, they have been giving the injections according to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines – reserving them for high-risk patients only. Hopefully, by the time you read this, there may be enough serum on hand to extend to all Providence patients NOT prioritized by CDC. It's a little frustrating

to the clinic staff, not knowing the answer to the questions, “When?” and “How much?” They really don't know if they will be able to offer the shots on a wider scale – they've been told to expect more serum, but it all depends on allocations and availability.

“High Risk” just means those people who are most vulnerable to the disease, such as:

- Children 6 months to 23 months
- Adults 65 and older
- Anyone from age 2 to 64 with chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, AIDS or heart disease
- Women who will be pregnant during flu season
- Health care workers with hands-on care of patients

So, the best advice, especially to non-Providence patients, and also those patients who are not in the high risk group, is to take advantage of various clinics in the area. Many businesses are having flu shot clinics – Vernonia Sentry will have one at the store on Sunday, November 6, from 12:00 to 6:00 p.m.

(If you are a Providence patient and are able to get your shot elsewhere, the clinic would appreciate it if you would contact them after you have received the vaccine, so your medical record can be updated.)

Hand-washing: Something as simple as washing your hands often and thoroughly may be the key to staying healthy, especially this time of year when we typically face colds, flu, and all those other communicable diseases out there. Use soap, lots of hot water, and scrub diligently. Cathy Rozinek, Clinic Manager, also suggests the use of a hand sanitizer – there are many on the market, and some are easily portable. They are different from anti-bacterial soaps – for one thing, they don't have to be rinsed off the hands, so are handier to use when you're in a hurry. A habit of using a sanitizer after grocery shopping, for example, is a good idea. If you've been in the clinic lately, you might notice dispensers of “Purel” in every examining room. Good idea.

Mammovan: The Mammovan will appear in Vernonia again on November 16. Call 503-429-9191 for an appointment.

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Fight osteoporosis with exercise, move it

What disease is almost as common as high blood pressure, and is more common than high cholesterol? The answer: Osteoporosis.

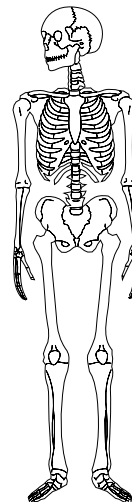
Osteoporosis is a condition in which bones become fragile and brittle, leading to a higher risk of fractures (breaks or cracks) than normal bone. Osteoporosis occurs when bones lose minerals such as calcium, and the body cannot replace these minerals fast enough to keep the bones healthy. As a result, bones become thinner and less dense.

Any bone can be affected by osteoporosis, but the most common sites are bones in the hip, spine, wrist, ribs, pelvis and upper arm. Osteoporosis usually has no signs or symptoms until a fracture occurs – this is why osteoporosis is often called a silent disease.

Fractures due to osteoporosis are known as osteoporotic fractures. These can lead to changes in posture (e.g., developing a stoop or Dowager's hump in your back), muscle weakness, loss of height and deformity of the area affected. Fractures can lead to long-term pain and disability, loss of independence, and may even contribute to premature death.

Once one fracture has occurred, the chances of having another fracture are much higher compared to someone who has not had any fractures. This “cascade effect” means that women who have suffered a fracture in their spine are over

four times more likely to have another fracture within the next year, compared to women who have never had an osteoporotic fracture. People who have had three or more fractures are 11 times more likely to have another fracture compared to someone who has not had one. To prevent this cascade effect, it is essential that osteoporotic fractures are identified and treated as quickly as possible.



Both men and women are affected by osteoporosis; one in two women and one in three men over the age of 60 will have a fracture due to osteoporosis. Osteoporosis effects men more than does prostate cancer. However, women are at a greater risk of developing this condition because of the hormonal changes that occur at the time of menopause.

Estrogen is a hormone that is important for maintaining healthy bones, and when estrogen levels decrease during

menopause, the bones lose calcium and other minerals at a much faster rate than they did before. While men also lose bone density as they age, it tends to remain adequate until much later in life.

Here are 5 Steps to Bone Health from the National Osteoporosis Foundation:

- Get your daily-recommended amounts of calcium and vitamin D.
- Engage in regular weight-bearing exercise.
- Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol.
- Talk to your doctor about bone health.
- Have a bone density test and take medication when appropriate.

Because bone is living tissue, which renews itself continuously, it requires regular stimulation from physical activity. Like muscles, bones should be used regularly or they will deteriorate, according to a recent report from the International Osteoporosis Foundation, “Move it or Lose it.”

“Exercise builds strong muscles, which in turn builds strong bones,” said Dr. Helmut Minne, of the IOF, said. “Exercise also improves muscle control, balance and coordination, and reduces the risk of falling or suffering a fracture during a fall.”

More information may be found on these Websites:

International Osteoporosis Foundation: <www.osteofound.org> or National Osteoporosis Foundation: <www.nof.org>.

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