

Learn four basic firearm safety rules

by Wolfgang Rotbart

This is the first of what I hope will be an ongoing series on firearm safety, proper usage, maintenance, etc. In these articles, I will not advocate firearm ownership and will avoid political issues such as gun control. I will, however, try to cover issues one should consider before acquiring a firearm, especially for self-defense.

I chose this topic as the lead because it is the foundation for the safe handling and use of all firearms in general, whether for hunting, target or self-defense.

By possessing a firearm, you are continually making a series of life-or-death decisions every time you use or even handle it. It is a grave responsibility that should not be taken lightly.

The Four Basic Rules, if followed unflinchingly, all but eliminate the possibility of a serious

or fatal unintentional discharge. So let's get to them.

The Four Basic Rules of Firearm Safety:

1) ALWAYS assume ALL firearms are loaded. A surprising number of people have been killed with what they thought were "unloaded" firearms.

2) Never point a firearm at anything you are not willing to kill, maim or destroy. Stated another way, keep it pointed in a safe direction at all times except in cases of extreme self-defense.

3) Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on target and you have made the decision to shoot.

4) Be sure of your target and what is beyond it. You are legally and morally responsible for everything that occurs from the moment you pull the trigger until the bullet stops.

I like this set of rules better

than some of the others out there because it is short and easy to remember. Most of the other sets of rules are just variations and combinations of these four. Another reason is that you pretty much have to break two or more of the rules at one time before someone gets hurt. However, I don't mean to imply that anyone should ever break ANY of these four rules at ANY time, but rather that they have a bit of built-in redundancy to them.

These rules do not adequately address the subject of firearm safety in and around the home, especially regarding children. That is a topic that will require its own article.

I welcome ideas for topics for these articles. Please email them to: Wolfgang@WolfgangTheGunDoctor.com or call me at 503-429-7342, Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

How to stay healthy during the holidays

With so many good things to do during the holiday season, who wants to spend precious time being sick? Here are some tips for staying healthy during the holidays.

Get the clean hands habit. Frequent handwashing is the number-one way to prevent the spread of germs that cause colds and flu. In the latest observational study 85% of adults washed their hands in public restrooms, compared with 77% in 2007. It shows that we're getting better, but there's still a long way to go.

Be handshake savvy. The

holiday meet-and-greets offer lots of opportunities for hugs and handshakes. The downside is the opportunity to transmit germs from person to person. Be very aware of keeping your hands away from your eyes, nose or mouth.

Control your social calendar. Answering every invitation may leave you overscheduled, overtired and vulnerable to the germs that cause colds and flu. Be judicious in your acceptances so you have time to do the things you really enjoy.

Get plenty of rest. According to the National Sleep Foundation, adults need seven to nine hours of sleep per night to stay healthy. If you find yourself running around like one of Santa's overworked elves, even 15-20 minutes of shut-eye will

recharge your batteries. But don't overdo it. Sleeping more than 30 minutes can lead to sleep inertia, which makes you feel sluggish and more tired than ever.

Reduce the possibility of food-borne illness. If you're hosting, keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. If you're the guest and think the buffet food may have been out too long, give the food a pass.

Join the weight control patrol. Here are a few helpful strategies:

- Eat a small, healthy meal before party time. It will be easier to resist the high calorie foods.

- At a party, don't stand next to the buffet table. It leads to the temptation to overeat. Instead, mingle with the guests.

- Carry an apple or baby carrots with you, so you always have a healthy snack available. Tuck some hand wipes or a hand sanitizer in with your snack so it's easy to have clean hands no matter where you eat.

- Drink plenty of water.

Don't give exercise a holiday. If there's no time to follow your usual routine, be creative. While watching television, ride an exercise bike, use a treadmill or do some other type of

exercise. If you don't have any exercise equipment, try crunches, pushups or jog in place during commercials. Park your car a little farther from the door when shopping so you can add a bit of walking to your routine. Forego the elevator or the escalator for the stairs.

Source: Extension Service Columbia County Healthy Family Newsletter

Columbia County holds Flu shot clinics

Columbia County Public Health has received flu vaccine and is giving shots at walk-in clinics on Fridays, 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 to 4:30 p.m., except on November 11, Veteran's Day. The clinics will be at Columbia County Public Health, 2370 Gable Road, St. Helens. No appointment is necessary for the walk-in clinics.

Appointments for flu shots on Wednesdays can be scheduled by calling the Public Health Foundation main number, 503-397-4651, ext. 2003 or 2010.

The fee is \$15, but can be reduced on a sliding scale, based on ability to pay. The vaccine is intended for the uninsured and underinsured.

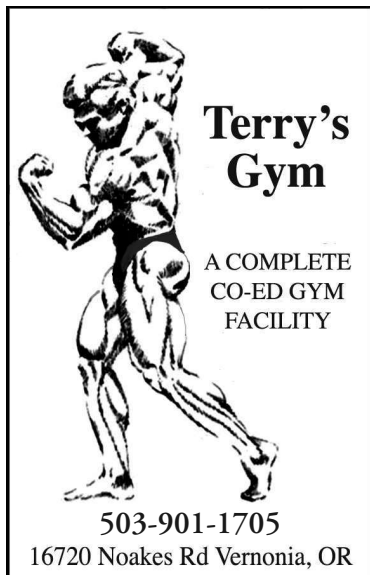
The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people six months of age and older should get the

flu vaccine. The vaccine is also important for people who are at higher risk of severe influenza, and their close contacts, including healthcare personnel and close contacts of children younger than six months.

Anyone can get the flu, but rates of infection are highest among children, people age 65 and older, pregnant women and people with certain health conditions or a weakened immune system can get much sicker.

Those who are vaccinated are protected, and also may avoid spreading influenza to others.

More information is available from the CDC website, www.cdc.gov/flu. Anyone with questions about whether or not they should be vaccinated should contact their physicians.



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Columbia County Mental Health 800-294-5211	Domestic Abuse Hotline 503-397-6161

Suicide Hotline 1-800-784-2433	or 866-397-6161

or 1-800-273-TALK(8255)	Military Helpline 888-HLP-4-VET (888-457-4838)