

HANDS-ON Health

Health Wave Newsletter, December 2007

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Have You Been Immunized?

Influenza vaccine can prevent influenza.

The ideal time to get influenza vaccine is October or November. But getting vaccinated in December, or even later, will still be beneficial in most years. You can get the vaccine as soon as it is available, and for as long as illness is occurring. Influenza illness can occur any time from November through May. Most cases usually occur in January or February.

On average, 226,000 people are hospitalized every year because of influenza and 36,000 die – mostly elderly.



In This Newsletter:

Influenza Vaccine It's not too late to get vaccinated. Read the CDC Guidelines to learn who is at risk (pages 1-2)

Stress-Less Holidays Take charge of your holiday season simple tips (pages 2-3) **Take the Candle Safety IQ test** (page 4)

3D Month Make your celebration one you'll live to remember. (page 3)

CDC Guidelines for who should get Inactivated Influenza Vaccine

1. People 6 months of age and older can receive inactivated influenza vaccine. It is recommended for anyone who is at risk of complications from influenza or more likely to require medical care:

- All children from 6 months up to 5 years of age.
- Anyone 50 years of age or older.
- Anyone 6 months to 18 years of age on long-term aspirin treatment (they could develop Reye Syndrome if they got influenza).
- Women who will be pregnant during influenza season.
- Anyone with long-term health problems with:
 - heart disease
 - kidney disease
 - lung disease
 - metabolic disease, such as diabetes
 - asthma

- anemia, and other blood disorders
- Anyone with a weakened immune system due to:
 - HIV/AIDS or other diseases affecting the immune system
 - long-term treatment with drugs such as steroids
 - cancer treatment with x-rays or drugs
- Anyone with certain muscle or nerve disorders (such as seizure disorders or severe cerebral palsy) that can lead to breathing or swallowing problems.
- Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities.

2. Influenza vaccine is also recommended for anyone who lives with or cares for people at high risk for influenza-related complications:

- Health care providers.
- Household contacts and caregivers of children from birth up to 5 years of age.

- Household contacts and caregivers of people 50 years and older, and those with medical conditions that put them at higher risk for severe complications from influenza.

3. A yearly influenza vaccination should be considered for:

- People who provide essential community services.
- People living in dormitories or under other crowded conditions, to prevent outbreaks.
- People at high risk of influenza complications who travel to the Southern hemisphere between April and September, or to the tropics or in organized tourist groups at any time.

4. Influenza vaccine is also recommended for anyone who wants to reduce the likelihood of becoming ill with influenza or spreading influenza to others.

Have You Been Immunized? (continued)

Be Aware of Common Flu Symptoms

The flu usually starts suddenly and may include these symptoms:

- Fever
- Headache
- Tiredness
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Chills
- Muscle aches

How can I learn more?

- Ask your immunization provider. They can give you the vaccine package insert or suggest other sources of information.
- Call your local or state health department.
- Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
 - Call 1-800-232-4636 (1-800-CDC-INFO)
 - Visit CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/flu

Stress-Less Holidays

Shopping, gift buying, cooking, parties, entertaining, family visits, travel, time constraints... money, budgets, diets. Does this sound like your typical holiday stress list? This year can be different. This year you can decide to take charge of the holidays instead of letting them take charge of you. Here are some ideas on how you can make this holiday the best ever.

Money and Shopping

- **Make a budget and stick to it.**
- **Leave charge cards at home.** By paying with cash or checks you are less likely to overspend. If you must use charge cards keep a running total of charges as you shop.
- **Give yourself plenty of time** and enough days to do your shopping. Waiting until the last minute often results in poor gift choices as well as waiting in long lines for purchases.
- If you have a large family, **pick names and put a dollar limit on gifts.** This way everyone has fewer gifts to buy and you can put more thought and time into the gift for the person you picked.
- **Take a magazine or paperback book with you.** While waiting on long lines you can catch up on some reading you haven't had time to enjoy because you've been out shopping and planning and preparing for the holidays.



Social Obligations

- **It is not necessary to attend every party** and religious event that comes along. Choose quality over quantity when allotting your time.
- **Be sensible about food and alcohol consumption.** It is very easy to overindulge at this time of the year. Drink alcohol in moderation, and of course, never drink and drive. Have a designated driver.
- Most people will put on a few extra pounds over the holidays. Plan ahead—**make it a point to drop five pounds before the holidays**—it is less stressful to lose the weight before, rather than after, the holidays.

Stress

- **Get organized.** Make lists for everything: "Things-to-do", gifts to buy, errands to run. Keep a pad and pen in the car, by your bed, in the kitchen, at your desk – when you think of something write it down. Don't expect to remember it later, you are already on overload
- **Simplify family traditions** that are too much work. You don't have to let go of them altogether, just simplify them so they can be an enjoyable part of the holiday festivities.
- **Get enough sleep.** Fatigue itself can lead to stress, lack of patience, overeating and susceptibility to illness.
- Memories of lost or separated friends and relatives can be stronger and more difficult to handle around the holidays. **If you're feeling saddened or overwhelmed, talk to your family or friends.** Don't be afraid or embarrassed to reach out for help.
- **Do something special for people you don't know.** Call a local shelter or nursing home to see how you

can help. Helping the less fortunate helps put your own problems into perspective.

- **Plan a post-holiday activity** that everyone can look forward to.

Safety

- **Make sure your home smoke detectors are working.**
- Keep fresh and artificial **trees away from fireplaces, radiators and heaters.**
- **Never leave candles unattended.** (See attached candle safety quiz on page 4)
- If you didn't get a **flu shot** already, consider getting one now.
- If bikes and skates are on the gift list, make sure to include the necessary **safety equipment** (helmets, knee pads, wrist guards...).
- **Never drive after drinking.** If a friend or family member has had too much to drink, call a taxi or invite them to spend the night.

Most importantly: smile, laugh, and enjoy this holiday season.

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National Drunk and Drugged Driving (3D) Prevention Month

3D Month was established by congressional legislation and presidential proclamation in December 1982 because the Christmas - New Year's period is typically one of the higher risk times on our roads due to a sharp increase in drinking and driving.

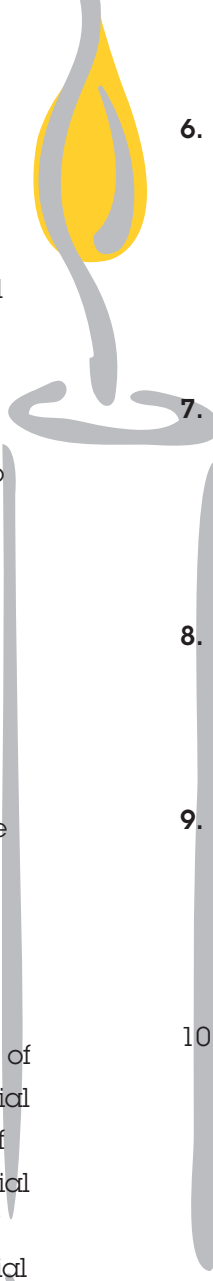
Impaired driving is the most frequently committed violent crime in America and every 30 minutes, someone in this country dies in an



alcohol-related crash, equating to approximately 17,000 deaths per year

Remember, an individual has choices — a choice to drink, a choice to drink to impairment, and a choice of whether or not to drive. Drunk driving fatalities, injuries, crashes and arrests can be prevented **IF** people make responsible choices. Make your celebration one you'll live to remember.

What's Your Candle Safety IQ?

- 
- Candles should be kept _____ away from things that can burn:
 - A couple of inches
 - one foot
 - two feet
 - three feet
 - It is ok to burn candles around kids and pets.
 - true
 - false
 - During a power outage it is important to have:
 - candles and matches ready to go
 - flashlights and batteries
 - a deck of cards and some board games
 - a combination of candles and flashlights
 - It is ok to leave the room while a candle is burning if you will be right back.
 - true
 - false
 - When should candles be extinguished?
 - when they burn down to two inches of their holder or any decorative material
 - when they burn down to one inch of their holder or any decorative material
 - when they burn down to 1/2 inch of their holder or any decorative material
 - it is okay to let candles burn out themselves
 - Candle holders should be _____.
 - pretty
 - able to tip over easily
 - made of material that can't burn and is big enough to catch wax
 - filled with dried flowers
 - Almost half of home fires started by candles begin in _____.
 - the kitchen
 - the bedroom
 - the living room
 - Kids and teenagers shouldn't be allowed to burn candles in their bedrooms.
 - true
 - false
 - It is ok to put lit candles in windows or near doorways if there is only an occasional draft.
 - true
 - false
 - The best way to extinguish a candle is to:
 - blow on it
 - pinch the flame with your fingers
 - use a long-handled candle snuffer
 - pour water on it

Correct Answers:

- one foot
- false
- flashlights and batteries
- false
- when they burn down to two inches of their holder or any decorative material
- made of material that can't burn and is big enough to catch wax
- the bedroom
- true
- false
- use a long-handled candle snuffer