

winning health



Santa Clara
Family Health Plan
The Spirit of Care

Fall/Winter 2012

3 keys to keep the flu at bay

No one wants the flu. The fever, sore throat, runny nose, aches and chills are no fun. And for some, the flu can be a serious—even deadly—illness. Young children, older adults and people with long-term health problems face the most risk. But you can foil the flu. Here's how:

1 Get a yearly flu shot.

Experts call this the best way to guard against the flu. Not only does it help prevent you from getting sick, it keeps you from spreading flu germs.

The vaccine is a good idea for most people 6 months old or older. Plan to get it as soon as it's offered where you live.

One shot each year protects you all flu season long.

Don't like needles? Don't worry. Many people can get the vaccine as a nasal spray. The spray is offered to healthy people ages 2 to 49 who are not pregnant.

Remember: You can't get the flu from the vaccine.

2 Don't pass it on.

Flu germs are passed from person to person.

To stay well:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If there's no soap or water, kill the germs with an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid others who are sick.

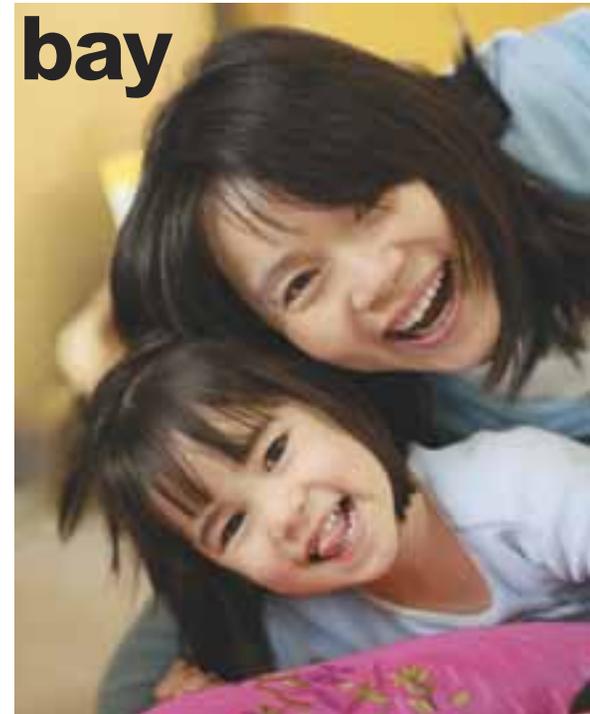
Even careful people can get the flu, though. If you do, try to keep germs from spreading. Use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze.

Also, stay away from others for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone.

3 Fight back and feel better.

If you get the flu, you may be able to do more than crawl under the covers and sip chicken soup. There are drugs for the flu that can:

- Help you feel better.



- Cut your sick time by a day or two.
- Prevent major flu-related problems.

You'll need your provider's OK. But don't wait too long to ask. The drugs work best when taken a day or two after the flu starts.

These medicines—pills, liquids or inhaled powders—are usually taken for about five days.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

» **TAKE ACTION.** If you think you are getting the flu and need advice, call our Nurse Advice Line at 877-509-0294.

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Know your diabetes ABCs

JUST LIKE YOU KNOW YOUR OTHER NUMBERS

If you have diabetes, you are at high risk for heart attack and stroke. *But you can fight back.* You can control the ABCs of diabetes and live a long and healthy life. Ask your health care provider what your **A**1C, **B**lood pressure, and **C**holesterol numbers are and ask what they *should* be. Then talk about the steps you can take to reach your ABC goals. You have the power to help prevent heart attack and stroke. Control your ABCs.

A message from the National Diabetes Education Program, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



» **TAKE ACTION.** For a free brochure about the ABCs of diabetes, call 800-438-5383 or visit www.ndep.nih.gov.



Are your kidneys working as well as they should?

Your kidneys need help to stay in good shape. Here are some things to keep in mind. First, know that diabetes and high blood pressure can hurt your kidneys. These conditions are the main causes of kidney disease.

If you have diabetes, work with your health care team to keep it under control. You will need to: » Eat well. » Get plenty of exercise. » Track your blood sugar levels. » Take medicine as your provider tells you to.

You'll also need to have your blood pressure checked on a regular basis. Ask your provider how often to have it checked and what your pressure should be. To meet your goal, you may need to change how you eat and how active you are.

Other ways to help your kidneys: » Stay at a healthy weight. » Drink plenty of fluids. » Don't smoke.

Talk to your provider about having blood and urine tests to check for kidney disease.

Source: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Basics for good eye care

If you have diabetes, your eyes may be at risk.

Most people with diabetes develop retinopathy. This is a problem that affects the back of the eye. Diabetes can also harm the front of the eye and the fluid inside.

Talk with your provider if you:

- Have blurry vision.
- Have double vision.
- See rings or floating spots.
- Have pain or pressure in your eye.
- Can't see out of the corner of your eye.

To help prevent eye problems:

- Control your blood sugar and blood pressure.
- Don't smoke.
- Have a yearly vision exam.

Source: National Institutes of Health

Diabetes and pregnancy: Take extra care

Diabetes is an illness where you have high blood sugar levels. If you get it while you are pregnant, it is called gestational diabetes.

High blood sugar can put you and your baby at risk. For example:

- You might get high blood pressure while pregnant.
- Your baby may grow very large before birth. It could be hard to deliver a large baby.
- You may need to have a c-section.
- Your baby may have blood sugar problems or breathing problems when born.

Diabetes during pregnancy can be controlled. Controlling diabetes can help reduce these risks. Your provider may ask you to:

- Follow a special eating plan.
- Do daily blood sugar checks.
- Exercise each day.
- Take medicine to help keep your blood sugar from getting too high.

Gestational diabetes usually goes away after you have your baby. But if you had it, you are at risk for getting type 2 diabetes later on. You may need tests every few years to keep an eye on your blood sugar.

Source: American Diabetes Association



Folic acid for a healthy pregnancy

If you're expecting a little one, be sure to get enough folic acid.

This B vitamin helps prevent some birth defects. It's important to start taking it before you are pregnant and to get the right amount every day.

Most women should get 400 micrograms (mcg) per day. Once you are pregnant, you need even more—about 600 mcg.

It's pretty easy to get lots of folic acid. You'll find it in:

- A multivitamin. Look for one with at least 400 mcg.
- Citrus fruit and juice.
- Dark-green leafy veggies, such as spinach.
- Most berries.
- Nuts.
- Dried peas and beans.
- Bread, cereal and pasta with folic acid added.

Sources: March of Dimes; Office on Women's Health

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