

SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:

- Employee Wellness Programs Benefit All.
- Programs Available in Muskingum County to Quit Smoking
- Quick & Easy Recipes that are Delicious Too.
- Interested in Helping Your Community? Join Us!

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Influenza Fast Facts for All

By: Chris Drake, BSN, RN, BC
Health Department Nurse

Hopefully we are all aware that it is time to get immunized against influenza!

Here are some fast facts we all should know about influenza.

- Influenza (the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness, NOT a stomach or intestinal illness. Its spread when droplets from a cough or sneeze of an infected person are propelled through the air and are deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby.
- It can also spread when a person touches respiratory droplets on another person or an object and then touches their own mouth or nose (or someone else's mouth or nose) before washing their hands.
- Influenza illness can include any or all of these symptoms:

Fever, muscle aches, headache, lack of energy, dry cough, sore throat, and possibly runny nose.

- Fever and body aches can last 3-5 days and the cough and lack of energy may last for two or more weeks.
- It can cause mild to severe

illness, and at times can lead to death.

In general, the flu is worse than the common cold. Symptoms such as fever, body aches, extreme tiredness, and dry cough are more common and intense. Colds are usually milder than the flu. People with colds are more likely to have a runny or stuffy nose. And, unlike the flu, colds generally do not result in serious health problems, such as pneumonia, bacterial infections, or hospitalizations.

It is important to know that:

- Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to five days after becoming sick.
- Symptoms start one to four days after the virus enters the body. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.
- Some persons can be infected with the flu virus but have no symptoms. During this time, those persons can still spread the virus to others.

The best way to prevent the flu

is by:

- Washing your hands frequently
- Getting the flu vaccination each year.

Here are some facts about the flu vaccine:

- The vaccine protects us against the most common viruses. With so many viruses around, it is still possible to come down with an illness that resembles influenza, but it would be less severe.
- You are protecting yourself and also those around you, especially infants younger than 6 months who are at the highest risk of influenza complications.
- The influenza vaccine does **not** give anyone "the flu" since the viruses in the vaccine are killed viruses; they cannot cause infection.
- The most common side effect is soreness in the arm where the injection was given.

For more influenza facts, please go to:

www.cdc.gov/flu

Now is Not the Time to put Wellness on Hold

By Connie Roethel, RN, MSH for Small Business Times



“But improving the health of your employee base, rather than simply providing reimbursement, is an exercise in risk management with a true ROI.”



THE APPLE

In today’s tough economic environment employers are searching for every cost-cutting opportunity they can find. Organizations who still view wellness as a frivolous, nice-to-have benefit might be tempted to cut back on wellness spending, but now is not the time to make those cuts. If we do, we’ll all pay the price in the long run. Rising health care costs are a significant risk to business growth, profitability and competitiveness. Creating and maintaining a healthier workforce is more important than ever in containing those costs. Unhealthy workers cost time and money.

- The unhealthiest workers have the highest medical costs.
- The unhealthier the lifestyle the greater the cost drain on the company.
- As unhealthy workers age their health costs increase.
- Smokers have higher medical costs.
- Smokers are more likely than non-smokers to miss more than a week of work because of health reasons.
- Inactive employees spend more time in the hospital and call in sick more often than those who exercise.
- Workers with severe weight problems are more likely to have medical claims exceeding \$5,000 in one year.
- Most unhealthy people have more than one health risk factor, meaning even higher costs to the company.
- If employers could get employees to lead healthier lives the number of risk factors would decrease and so would health costs.

Even during a financial crisis, investing in human capital is good business, say industry experts. “CFOs have always viewed health care as an expense, but rarely as an investment,” said Jerry Ripperger, director of consumer health at the [Principal Financial Group](#). “But improving the health of your employee base, rather than simply providing reimbursement, is an exercise in risk management with a true ROI.” To save more money on health care in the future, companies must spend more money on health care now. Studies show that for every dollar spent implementing an employee wellness program, employers see an average reduction of \$2.45 in medical claims.

Getting the most out of your wellness dollars

When considering how wellness dollars should be spent, doing an annual health risk assessment (HRA) can be the most effective way to identify and provide intervention for health risk factors. A good HRA includes a health survey with questions that address health and medical history, lifestyle, and a biometric screening. Self reported biometric results are acceptable but an actual screening that includes a blood draw is the most accurate and informative. While some employees may have concerns about participating in these screenings, studies show that completing a health risk assessment ranks among the most popular workplace wellness activities. Once they’ve been through the process, most employees find the annual event informative and helpful in making improvements in their health. With rising deductibles and co-pays many employees see the HRA as a cost savings, using it as a pre-screen to a clinic visit, and then sharing those results with their physician

For others, the HRA is their only form of preventive care. They only go to the doctor when they are sick. By then the progression of disease has reached a more serious, more costly level. The HRA provides preventive care, often detecting undiagnosed health risk factors like hypertension and diabetes. Comparison reports show that employees who participate in repeat annual health risk assessments gradually decrease the number of health risk factors and improve their overall health scores. To get employees to participate can be challenging in some environments. Nearly half of employers offering health risk assessment offer rewards for completing them. The most effective incentives to get employees to participate are financial, with discounts on health insurance premiums having the highest motivational impact. Some companies are even requiring participation as a condition of enrollment in the medical plan.

We are experiencing the toughest economic conditions in our lifetime, resulting in a fiercely competitive marketplace, losses of thousands of jobs and uncertainty about the future. Employees are being asked to do more with less, increasing their risk for illness, injury, and stress related illness. It is more critical than ever to maintain the health of the existing workforce. Not only do wellness programs reduce health risks, they improve overall health, they create more loyal and engaged employees, improve job satisfaction

Presented by:
Muskingum County
Wellness Coalition
Information taken from
American Cancer Society and
www.quit.net

The Inside Scoop on Tobacco Cessation

The best way to prevent tobacco addiction is to never try tobacco products. Many tobacco users will tell you that they wish they had never taken that first puff or dip and over 70% report a desire to quit. Once addicted, and it doesn't take long, it is a very difficult habit to break. Nicotine is more addictive than cocaine or heroine. The average tobacco user has six failed attempts at quitting before they are successful. Don't buy into the myth that if you fail the first time you will never be able to quit. Each time you try, you learn and can change your approach, armed with more information.

Multiple vital body systems are damaged by tobacco use. The heart and lungs suffer devastating changes leading to heart attacks, strokes, circulation problems, and shortness of breath to name a few. Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable deaths in the United States.

Many people think that smoking "light" or "low tar" cigarettes is not as harmful, but this is not true. No studies have proven that these products are any safer than the conventional cigarette.

There is also a misconception that spit tobacco, dip and chew, is not as harmful as smoking. Consider these facts:

- There are over 2000 chemicals in spit tobacco, 28 that cause cancer
 - Toxic chemicals go quickly from the mouth into the blood and body tissues
 - Spit tobacco puts 2 to 3 times the amount of nicotine into the body than a single cigarette
 - The heart rate increases and the heart can be damaged
 - It increases the blood pressure
 - It can cause mood changes
 - Irritation and sores develop in the mouth increasing the risk of cancer of the lips, cheek, gums, tongue, and throat
- It causes tooth decay & cavities

If you use tobacco make the decision to stop. Use community resources, the internet or phone help lines. Be prepared ahead of time to increase your chances of success, follow the American Cancer Society's START program:

- * START a tobacco free life
- * S = set a date
- * T = tell everyone you are quitting
- * A = anticipate difficult situations
- * R = remove all tobacco products & reminders: change your routine
- * T = talk with your health care provider regarding nicotine replacement therapy & medications

Consider this, if you smoke one pack of cigarettes a day at \$5, over the next year you could save \$1,825. Put that \$5 in a jar each day so that you actually can see your progress. Set a goal and choose a reward for yourself with the money you'll save.

Remember:

If you don't use tobacco – don't start

If you use tobacco – quit now. Seek the assistance of others, talk with your health care provider.

Resources are numerous, here are a few:

Quitnet

www.quitnet.org

Rambo Memorial Health Center
740-452-5401

The Ohio Quit Line

1-800-quit-now (1-800-784-8669)

The American Cancer Society

1-800-227-2345 www.cancer.org





Muskingum County Wellness Coalition

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Zanesville-Muskingum County Health Dept.

New Members Welcomed!

Our your interested in making Muskingum County a healthier community for all. Join us on the first Thursday of each month at 9:00 a.m. at Zanesville-Muskingum County Health Dept.

We are a collaborative group striving to improve our community through health and wellness. For questions please contact us at the information provided on this newsletter.

Nutritious and

Delicious Recipes

Banapple Freeze (Serves 2)

- Freeze 2 bananas
- Blend in a blender until smooth:
 - 2 frozen bananas
 - 1 cup 100% apple juice

Variation: Add in a few raspberries or blueberries to taste.

Quick Minestrone Soup (serves 8)

Preparation Time: 25 minutes

- ½ cup whole-wheat pasta, uncooked
- 1 16-oz. package frozen mixed vegetables
- 2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 15 ½ oz. can kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 16-oz. can tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons parsley, chopped
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

Cook pasta in boiling water for 10 minutes. Drain. Meanwhile, cook vegetables in broth 15 minutes or until tender. Add beans, tomatoes, seasonings, and pasta. Heat through.



Have a nutritious recipe that is quick and simple? Submit it to our newsletter at the e-mail address listed above.



Recipes from:
www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org