

December 1, 2017

Good Seasonal Advice from Health Plan of San Joaquin - for your readers & you

- Message to Editors and Journalists
- From the HPSJ Health Articles Library

Here are two important lines of advice for your readers – and for you, your family and staff!

1. **Spotlight on Influenza – Take your best shot, it’s not too late for the flu vaccine** (424 words)
2. **Keep the happy in holidays: Nine tips for making them safe** (285 words)

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Thanks for your consideration.

Article: 424 words

Spotlight on Influenza - Take your best shot, it’s not too late for the flu vaccine

“The flu virus is spread from one person to another before a person has symptoms and after you have symptoms. Infants and older adults can have severe complications and bad outcomes from flu. So to stay healthy and to prevent others from getting the flu it is important to get the flu vaccine. It also is important to keep in mind that the flu spreads when someone coughs, sneezes or talks. People with the flu can spread it to others up to six feet away.” – **Chief Medical Officer Lakshmi Dhanvanthari, MD, Health Plan of San Joaquin**

Here’s some practical advice from Health Plan of San Joaquin. Even though this year’s flu season is in full swing, you can still help protect yourself from the flu if you get the vaccine now. As always, your best defense against the flu is to get a flu shot.

Who needs it?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone six months and older be vaccinated against the flu. It’s especially important that people at high risk for getting complications from the flu—such as pneumonia—get the vaccine.

That high risk group includes kids younger than five years old; adults 65 and older; pregnant women; and people who have chronic health conditions, such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease. Anyone who lives with or is in close contact with someone on that list should also make getting the vaccine a priority.

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There's good news for people who previously could not get a flu shot because they're allergic to eggs, which are used to manufacture vaccines. A flu vaccine called Flublok, which is made without using eggs, has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for adults 18 and older.

It takes several weeks for the flu vaccine to take effect. And since flu season can continue until May, the sooner you get your shot the better.

What else can you do?

Even if you've had your flu shot, you should take these steps to avoid the flu virus:

- Wash your hands often, using soap and water
- No soap and water? Use an alcohol-based hand cleaner
- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth
- Stay away from sick people

It's also important to minimize the spread of germs to others. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and throw the tissue away. If you get sick with a flu-like illness, stay home until your fever has been gone for 24 hours without taking a fever-reducing medicine.

Article: 285 words

Keep the happy in holidays: Nine tips for making them safe

As you make your holiday to-do list, Health Plan of San Joaquin wants to be sure it includes this important task: Take steps to stay safe.

Here are some tips to help keep you and your family—pets included—out of harm's way:

- 1. Step up carefully.** Use a step stool or ladder to place decorations in high places.
- 2. Be cautious with candles.** Always keep them at least 12 inches away from anything that can burn. Don't forget to blow them out when you leave the room. And keep candles on stable surfaces and out of the reach of children and pets.
- 3. Check holiday lights.** Take a close look to find any exposed or frayed wires, loose connections, or broken sockets.

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4. **Trim trees with kids and pets in mind.** Keep breakable ornaments or those with metal hooks near the top of the tree—and away from curious little ones and animals.
5. **Fireproof your tree, too.** Live trees dry out rapidly. So keep the stand filled with water. Turn off all tree lights and decorations when not in use. And keep your tree away from fireplaces, radiators and portable heaters.
6. **Watch out for potentially poisonous plants.** Keep mistletoe berries, holly berry and Jerusalem cherry out of reach of tots and pets.
In a poison emergency call the national Poison Control Center at **1-800-222-1222**.
7. **Match toys to kids' ages.** Always take the time to check packages for suitable age ranges.
8. **Don't forget the helmet.** If you're surprising a child with a bike, skateboard or other riding toy, be sure to include a helmet.
9. **Protect your family and guests from food poisoning.** Reheat holiday leftovers to at least 165 degrees.

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