



live well, work well

September 2013

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Is a Flu Shot Right For You?



Influenza is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death. Every year, as many as 49,000 people in the United States die from influenza or related complications, according to the CDC, with the vast majority of victims being 65 years and older.

Flu season in the United States typically begins in October and can last as late as May. During this time, viruses that cause the flu circulate through the population.

The CDC recommends the flu shot as the best way protect yourself from contracting influenza. A person who receives the flu vaccine is 60 percent less likely to need treatment by a healthcare provider. Getting the vaccine has been shown to offer substantial other benefits including reducing illness, antibiotic use, time lost from work, hospitalizations and deaths.

People should get the flu shot as soon as it becomes available in their community in late September or early

October. Receiving the vaccine during this timeframe will protect you for the duration of the flu season and spare you from long waits and possible shortages as flu season unfolds.

There are two types of vaccines:

The nasal-spray flu vaccine is made with weakened flu viruses administered through the nostrils. It is approved for use in healthy people ages 2 through 49 years who are not pregnant.

The flu shot is an inactivated vaccine that is given with a needle, usually in the arm. The flu shot is approved for use in people older than 6 months, including healthy people and people with chronic medical conditions.

There are three different flu shots available:

- A regular flu shot approved for people ages 6 months and older
- A high-dose flu shot approved for people 65 and older, and
- An intradermal flu shot approved for people 18 to 64 years of age.

People who have a history of severe reaction to flu shots, severe allergies to chicken eggs or are currently suffering from a moderate-to-severe illness should consult their doctor before getting the vaccine.

Do You Know Your Cholesterol Level?

Cholesterol is a waxy, fat-like substance found in your body and many foods. Your body needs cholesterol to function normally and you usually receive all you need from the food you eat. However, too much cholesterol is bad; it builds up in arteries, reducing blood flow and increasing the risk for heart disease and stroke.

High cholesterol can affect people from early childhood through old age, while usually not showing any symptoms. Because of this, it's recommended adults have their cholesterol levels checked once every five years, while children as young as two should be checked for high cholesterol if they have elevated risk factors like being overweight or a family history of high cholesterol.

A simple blood test called a lipoprotein profile can measure your total cholesterol levels, including LDL (low-density lipoprotein, or "bad" cholesterol), HDL (high-density lipoprotein, or "good" cholesterol), and triglycerides.

DID YOU KNOW

Most of the cholesterol in your body is made in your liver, using saturated fat from your diet. The American Heart Association recommends that daily cholesterol intake not exceed 300 mg.



Fall Fitness

Just because summer is over doesn't mean your window for fitness has closed. Here are some great healthy activities you can engage in when the air turns crisp and the days grow short.

Go for a walk. There seems to be no end to the benefits of walking. Several studies over the past few years have found that walking can help you lose weight, relieve back pain and mental fatigue, boost your creativity, improve digestion and even out blood sugar levels.

Start a physical activity class. As the year begins to wind down, many indoor recreational classes are just starting up. Take advantage of gym and studio calendars to start a new fitness program or learn a new active skill.

Rake leaves. Even yard work counts as exercise. It is a great activity for targeting upper body strength while incorporating some cardio and can burn over 200 calories an hour.



Back-to-School Savings

The average family with school-age children will spend more than \$630 dollars on school related items in 2013, according to the National Retail Federation. While that's less than last year, the following list will help your family stay well below the new average as you prepare your kids for the coming school year.

Take Inventory. Before you shop for new clothes, take time to sort through your children's wardrobes and find what can be reused. Make a list that includes all the articles of clothing they have and what they will need.

Set a Budget. Check your credit card receipts from last year for a baseline on spending, then challenge yourself to spend less.

Prioritize. Order items by importance before shopping. Buy essential school supplies first, and then apply your remaining budgeted funds to more flexible items like clothing, lunchboxes and backpacks.

Buy in bulk. Depending on your child's age and class description, he or she will use lots of pens, pencils, paper, notebooks, printer paper, markers and paints. Buying in bulk reduces your cost per item, and the extra items can be used to replenish supplies throughout the school year or carry over to the next grade.

Swap. Host a party with other parents to trade outgrown clothing and extra supplies for "new" items. Websites like SwapMamas.com are available for parents who aren't able to meet up with other people in person.

Fall Vegetable Casserole

This flavorful dish takes advantage of freshly harvested seasonal vegetables and can be prepared in less than 20 minutes.

1 medium eggplant
4 tomatoes
1 green pepper
1 onion
1 tsp. salt
¼ tsp. pepper
3 tbsp. vegetable oil
1 garlic clove
2 tbsp. Parmesan cheese (grated)

Remove the skin from the eggplant, and then cut the eggplant into cubes. Dice tomatoes, pepper, onion and garlic. Cook all the ingredients except for the cheese in a large skillet over medium-high for about 10 to 12 minutes until tender. Sprinkle cheese over cooked vegetables and serve.

Yield: 8 servings. Each serving provides 90 calories, 6g of fat, 0mg of cholesterol, 320mg of sodium, and 3g of fiber.

Source: USDA