

Caregiver

THE NEWSLETTER OF DRAKE MEDOX COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS

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Is it the Flu, or is it the Common Cold?

By Canada's National Occupational Health & Safety Resource

What is the Common Cold?

It is an infection of the upper respiratory track – the nose, nasal passages and the throat. There are more than 200 viruses that can cause colds.

What are the symptoms of the common cold?

Symptoms usually show up about two days after a person becomes infected. Early signs of a cold are a sore, scratchy throat, sneezing, and a runny nose. Other symptoms that may occur later include headache, stuffy nose, watering eyes, hacking cough, chills, and general malaise (ill feeling) lasting from 2 to 7 days. Some cases up to 2 weeks.

How are the common cold viruses transmitted?

Colds are really not very contagious, compared to other infectious diseases. Close personal and prolonged contact is necessary for the cold viruses to spread. The viruses must get into the nose where they can infect the nasal membranes. The virus must attach to nasal cells after which the viruses can multiply. Inhaling contaminated droplets produced when someone else coughs or sneezes may be one way to catch a cold.

Can you tell the difference between a cold and the “flu”?

You cannot really tell the difference between a cold and the flu (from the word “influenza”) from the symptoms alone. Flu symptoms usually occur very quickly after one is infected but the onset of cold symptoms can be up to a couple of days or so. Symptoms like headaches, fever and muscle ache and pains are usually associated with influenza but someone with a severe common cold could also have these symptoms.

What is the cause of influenza?

Influenza, commonly called “the flu”, is a contagious disease caused by viruses that infect the respiratory tract including nose, throat, and lungs. Influenza causes severe illness and life threatening complications in many people.

What are the symptoms of influenza?

The symptoms of influenza include fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, headache, muscle aches, and fatigue.

Most people who get the flu recover completely. However, some people especially the elderly and those with chronic health problems can develop serious complications. These include pneumonia and aggravation of pre-existing medical conditions such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes.

How is influenza transmitted?

The influenza viruses mainly are spread from person to person through droplets produced while coughing or sneezing. Droplets of an infected person are propelled by coughing and sneezing into the air and are deposited on the mouth or nose of people nearby. This droplet transmission of the flu is a kind of contact transmission.

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The influenza viruses can also be transmitted by indirect contact by touching a contaminated object or surface and then touching your own mouth, eyes or nose before washing your hands. This is also called fomite transmission – a fomite is any surface or inanimate thing (door knobs, telephones, towels, money, clothing, dishes, books, etc.) that has a contagious or infective agent after an infected person contaminated it by touching it or sneezing on it. Viruses can survive on surfaces – longer on hard, impermeable surfaces than on porous surfaces. The viruses can still be infective for two hours and maybe up to eight hours. It is easier to catch the common cold than influenza.

Drake Medox has ordered Flu vaccines from the Vancouver Coastal Health and will be providing a series of Flu Vaccine Clinics starting in early November. There is no charge for the Flu Vaccine for health care workers. You can either attend one of the Drake Medox Flu Vaccine Clinics or you can ask your family doctor to provide you with a Flu shot. If you receive your Flu shot from your family physician please make sure he/she provides you with a note indicating that the vaccine has been provided and submit this to the office as soon as possible. All Community Health Workers are expected to receive the Flu vaccine in order to prevent the spread of illness to your vulnerable and at risk clients. If you have not received the Flu shot you may be prevented from receiving work during a potential Influenza outbreak.

Keep your eyes open for the Flu Clinic dates and make sure you register with Nancy at Reception to attend one of these clinics.



MEDICATIONS

The following are the proper protocols to follow when the care/service plan indicates you are to assist a client with these tasks. Remember that you must be ACT trained before providing this care to clients who are able to direct their own care and for clients who are unable to direct their own care you must be indirectly or directly trained by one of our Nurse Supervisors.

Medication Reminders:

1. Explain procedure to client
2. Check client 5 rights (right client, right date, right day, right time, right route)
3. Remind client to obtain bubble pack or dosette container and select appropriate medication.
4. Monitor client
5. Watch as client punches out or removes pills from container, bring them water.
6. Watch while client takes medication
7. Document after medication taken (Notify office immediately if meds are out of order, missing from dosette, or client having difficulty adhering to a schedule)

Administration of Oral Medication from Dosette or Bubble Pack:

1. Explain procedure to client
2. Wash hands
3. Obtain Bubble pack or dosette container
4. Check client 5 rights
5. Punch out or remove pills from container, placing them on a small plate (don't touch them)
6. Take medications to client with a drink
7. Watch while client swallows medication
8. Return bubble pack or dosette to where it is stored
9. Document after medication taken (Notify office immediately if meds are out of order, missing from dosette, or client having difficulty adhering to a schedule)

ACT TRAINING

If you have not already done so, please make sure you sign up for the next available ACT Training Program. This training runs for 3 consecutive weeks on either Tuesday evening or Thursday afternoons. All staff must attend this training so be sure to register today. If you aren't planning to visit the office soon call Nancy and she will add your name to the applicable registration sheet.

DRAKE MEDOX PALLIATIVE CARE **TEAM MEETING**

There will be a Palliative Care Team Meeting on **Thursday October 16, 2008 from 6-8 pm** at the Medox offices. If you are part of the Drake Medox Palliative Care Team please let Nancy know that you will be attending as we will be providing a Pizza dinner for all attendees.

Heather Parker – Instructor with Drake Medox College will provide a short presentation on the death and dying process. Tine Kramer, our Palliative Care Field Supervisor and Angelita our Palliative Care Scheduler will be present to discuss your clients concerns with you.

Halloween Season - Trick or Treat?



It is important to remember this season can bring much fun and games but it also attracts individuals who like to play “pranks” on vulnerable people and animals. Enjoy the season but keep your eyes open and be aware of your surroundings.

The firecrackers will start going off soon and this may be startling to your clients so keeping this in mind, stay calm, remind them it is the youngsters enjoying the Halloween festivities and there is nothing to concern themselves with.

When it come to travelling in the evenings it is always good to keep your guard up and that eye in the back of your head open, but specifically this time of year as some pranksters do not get

the fact that they are not amusing and can sometimes be intimidating. The best way to help you enjoy the Halloween fun, or at least not be bothered by it is give you some tips you can use all year long to help you feel more confident and comfortable when commuting on your own. The following are very useful tools and we hope you will use them wisely:

ABS's of Self Defense

- A Always Make Eye Contact***
- B Be Calm***
- C Communicate with Confidence***
- D Don't Put Yourself in a Worse Situation***
- E Environment Can Create Opportunity***
- F "Fire" is Better than Help***
- G Get Away, Don't Try to Win, Just Get Away***

Women's Safety Awareness

- ***Know what is in your purse, items can be used as a weapon***
- ***Wear flat shoes whenever possible***
- ***Don't carry your purse loosely, this invites a theft attack. If you sense attack dup your purse in front of your attacker which will cause confusion and allow you an opportunity to run away***
- ***Wait for an opportunity then with all your might, energy, rage and anger disable your attacker and GET AWAY AS FAST AS YOU CAN!***

Stay tuned for more safety tips coming in your next newsletter.

Happy Birthday to: