

BYU WELLNESS PROGRAM

HELPING YOU TO BUILD A HEALTHY FUTURE



INFLUENZA

By Gus Hoffman, MD MBA
Department of Health Services

It is fall again and along with the changes in the weather, the turning of the leaves, the cool nights and warm days, we face another annual event - Influenza. For our area of the world, the flu season comes each winter, principally during December, January, and February. It is an annual event which no one, including clinicians, looks forward to its arrival. Unfortunately it occurs at a time of year when many other virus infections are going around.

Influenza is a viral infection that usually makes its way around the earth beginning in the Far East in the late spring or early summer. It is a virus which has made the jump from another species to our species, usually from pigs or chickens to humans. It changes its envelope periodically so that antibodies formed during previous infections will not protect against the latest infection. That is why a different vaccine is needed each year. The vaccine is based upon the influenza virus projected to be the cause of the expected infection during the upcoming flu season. If that particular virus appears, the vaccine will be over 90% effective in preventing the infection. If the influenza virus happens to mutate, the vaccine will be less effective, somewhere in the 70% range. You can thus see the problems which arise in developing vaccines against this virus.

The symptoms of influenza are classic - fever, chills, aching muscles, headache, congestion, cough, and frequently back pain. Contrary to public understanding, vomiting and diarrhea do not occur with flu, except when Reyes Syndrome complicates the infection. The infection may last up to a week and the one characteristic that is common with flu infections is that the person feels terrible. The aching muscles and headache ease after a few days but the congestion may continue for eight to ten days. Secondary infections such as pneumonia do occur but fortunately they are not now as common as previously seen. During the epidemic of 1918, pneumonia was a common cause of death.

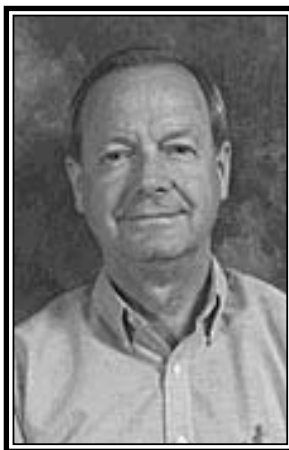
The treatment of flu is symptomatic. It is a viral infection and therefore antibiotics are of no use. To give antibiotics to make the patient feel better is contraindicated. Secondary infections do occur but they are uncommon also. The exception would be children. Young children get ear infections commonly and those would probably need to be treated, depending upon the

age and the severity of the infection. We have learned over the past few years that many ear infections in children clear on their own and antibiotics are not needed. You should treat yourself with either Tylenol or Ibuprofen to relieve the symptoms. Aspirin is absolutely contraindicated because it can cause Reyes Syndrome leading to coma and death. Fluids are necessary because we use up tissue water during periods of fever. Rest is also important so we can use the body's resources fighting the infection. Thus, the age old joke of "take 2 tylenol, drink lots of fluids, and call me in the morning" is true when it comes to influenza.

The one treatment which is effective is the immunization. As we do yearly, the vaccine will be offered to employees and their spouses through the BYU Wellness program. They will be offered during two weeks in November. The cost will be \$9.00 which may be covered by insurance. Appointments should be made through the Wellness office or at its website. The side effects are minimal (sore muscle, occasionally aching), while the benefits are great. The vaccine is particularly recommended for those over 55 years, those with chronic lung or heart disease, those having had a splenectomy, and those at high risk of exposure (medical professionals, nursing home personnel, police, etc.).

Beginning last year the vaccine was recommended for children six months and older. The reason is that the younger children have turned out to be the vector for transmission of the virus to others. Some studies have shown a 75% decrease of symptoms of flu in homes where the youngest children have been immunized. There is also a higher incidence of hospitalization for children with flu under four years of age than for those over 55 years. The American Academy of Pediatrics is recommending the vaccine for children for these reasons. It is given as two ½ doses four weeks apart. Remember your little ones when you decide to get the vaccine.

Thus we would suggest that anyone wishing to prevent the flu receive the vaccine. Of course, you can always catch the bug and suffer. After all, suffering is good for the soul.



Dr. Gus Hoffman

BYU Wellness Program Presents

Flu Shots

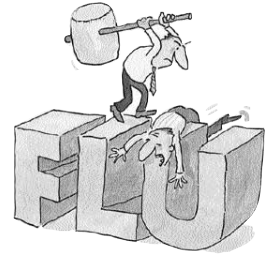
Millions of people in the United States – about 10% to 20% of U.S. residents – get the flu each year.

November 11, 12, 14, 15, 18, 19, 21 & 22

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Wednesdays, November 13 & 20

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.



Registration is limited.

Flu shots are for university personnel and their families.

Each participant needs to register individually

BYU Wellness Program Presents

Fun Walk Dive into Diabetes

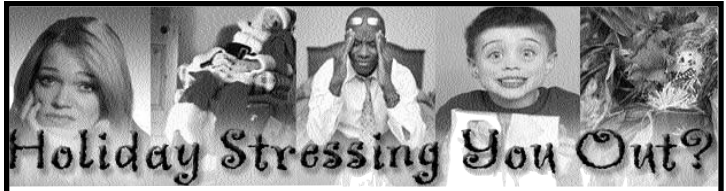


Did you know that Diabetes is the fastest rising epidemic in America? Come walk with faculty, staff, and administrators to find out about the risk factors and prevention methods for diabetes.

Friday, November 8, 2002

11:45 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Register during the first half hour in the quad between the SFH and



Research shows that work stress is as harmful to you as smoking or not participating in exercise.

The BYU Wellness program is proud to present a Well & Wise Seminar by Dr. Dan Daley, professor of psychology.

Wednesday, November 20, 2002

12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

3380 WSC (Little Theater)

For more information, please go to www.byu.edu/wellness

Defensive Driving



Thursday,
November 21, 2002
1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
268 UPB

The National Safety Council Defensive Driving Course is presented across the country. It is designed for citizens who are interested in becoming safer drivers and in receiving defensive driving certification for insurance purposes.

Join us! It will be well worth your time!



Holiday Weight Challenge

Take the challenge -- Maintain your weight this holiday season!

Register online at www.byu.edu/wellness before November 15 and receive a Holiday Help Packet with exciting recipes and health tips. Weigh in any of the following times.

Times	Monday, Nov. 25	Tuesday, Nov. 26
8:30-10:30 a.m.	WSC 3239	WSC 3239
12-3 p.m.	ASB A-203	UPB 268
	Tuesday, Jan. 7	Wednesday, Jan. 8
8:30-10:30 a.m.	WSC 3239	WSC 3239
12:00-2:00 p.m.	ASB C-245	UPB 268