



FROM THE DESK OF THE DDSN MEDICAL CONSULTANT

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HEALTH INFORMATION UPDATE

Notes for staff, consumers and members of the SCDDSN Community

Influenza:

- Winter is the season that influenza (flu) spreads.
- This winter has been quiet but the last week numbers of cases are increasing.
- Immunization is the best way to reduce the chance of you (and others) getting the illness.
- It is NOT TOO LATE to get the vaccine – please do get vaccinated if you have not yet been immunized for this season.
- The strain H1N1 that was the cause for the 2009 pandemic is still around. It is in the vaccines made for the 2013-14 season – please get it to protect yourself and people close to you. Everyone over the age of 6 months is recommended to have the vaccine.
- We care for people who have an increased risk of getting the flu and having problems. We need to be immunized to help reduce their risk.
- The groups of high risk include people that are
 - those with chronic illness
 - those in long-term care
 - pregnant women
 - children under 2 years old
 - those over 65 years old
- We can help reduce spread of influenza by the old fashioned standard but effective methods
 - wash hands
 - cough protection
 - stay home if sick
- Influenza causes
 - fever
 - cough
 - aches in muscles and joints
 - tiredness (fatigue)
- If you or someone you are caring for at work or home has these symptoms, please have them checked. Please keep them away from others. Give fluids and rest and pain relievers. Wash hands after caring for them. Check for shortness of breath, high fever, and extreme fatigue. They may need antiviral drugs early – ask your health care clinicians.

Folic Acid:

- January is National Birth Defects Prevention Month.

In South Carolina we have been fortunate that SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, Greenwood Genetic Center and DHEC have collaborated to help our state reduce the number of babies born with neural tube defects like hydrocephalus and spina bifida. This has been possible by encouraging women to use folic acid (folate) supplements before and during pregnancy. We need to keep up the good work by encouraging women to have a varied diet and use folic supplements if they plan a pregnancy or become pregnant.

See more details <http://www.webmd.com/baby/folic-acid-and-pregnancy>