



NEWSLETTER

Volunteers Building Strong, Healthy, and Prepared Communities

December 2014

It's Flu Season!

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Why should people get vaccinated against the flu?

Influenza is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death. Every flu season is different, and influenza infection can affect people differently. Even healthy people can get very sick from the flu and spread it to others. During a regular flu season, about 90 percent of deaths occur in people 65 years and older. "Flu season" in the United States can begin as early as October and last as late as May.

During this time, flu viruses are circulating at higher levels in the U.S. population. An annual seasonal flu vaccine (either the flu shot or the nasal spray flu vaccine) is the best way to reduce the chances that you will get seasonal flu and spread it to others. When more people get vaccinated against the flu, less flu can spread through that community.

How do flu vaccines work?

Flu vaccines cause antibodies to develop in the body about two weeks after vaccination. These antibodies provide protection against infection with the viruses that are in the vaccine. The seasonal flu vaccine protects against the influenza viruses that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming season.

Who should get vaccinated this season?

Everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine every season. This recommendation has been in place since February 24, 2010 when CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted for "universal" flu vaccination in the United States to expand protection against the flu to more people.

Where can I get a flu vaccine?

Flu vaccines are offered in many locations, including doctor's offices, clinics, health departments, pharmacies and college health centers, as well as by many employers, and even in some schools.

For more information on the seasonal flu vaccine visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm>. Public Health-Idaho North Central District offers a variety of immunization options throughout our five county offices. Contact our Lewiston office at (208) 799-3100 for flu vaccine information.



Public Health - Idaho North Central District
215 10th Street Lewiston, ID 83501

Community Emergency Response Team

The Latah County Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is looking for volunteers to respond to natural disasters, terrorist events and other emergencies.

CERT training enables volunteers to effectively assist others if a disastrous event overwhelms your community. Volunteers are trained in: basic fire safety; disaster medical operations (which includes triage; bandaging; splinting); light search and rescue; and animal response. The program is designed to provide rapid and safe care for our residents and to support first responders in the event of a major/minor incident or large-scale disaster.

The trainings involve drills and workshops and are taught weekly for eight weeks. CERT provides a disaster simulation at the end of your training to test your

learning skills.

CERT members also participate in projects throughout the counties and communities to promote and improve emergency preparedness.



Volunteers will be provided with the basic supplies to be a CERT volunteer, including backpack, gloves, safety goggles, dust masks, whistles, etc.

Volunteers from all counties are encouraged to get involved in the CERT program. Please contact Ryan Bender at (208) 799-0393 to schedule a training in your area. Trainings will be offered in Latah or Nez Perce counties by CERT instructors.

You can find more information on the Latah County CERT through their Facebook page or at www.citizencorps.gov/cert.

Ryan Bender—MRC Coordinator
(208) 799-0393
rbender@phd2.idaho.gov

Full Scale Exercise

Public Health—Idaho North Central District is working with healthcare partners from our region on a full-scale mass casualty incident exercise on April 25, 2015 in Kamiah, Idaho. The exercise will simulate a bus crash scenario involving 30 patients. The Medical Reserve Corps has been contacted to provide volunteers to act as patients in the exercise. Patients will be treated on scene by arriving EMS agencies and transported to one of four regional hospitals. The exercise will assist with regional communication and med surge practices within our healthcare facilities.

Along with the need for patients, volunteers will be needed for a variety of roles during the day. If you would like to participate in this exercise, please contact Ryan Bender at rbender@phd2.idaho.gov or 208-799-0393 to find out how you can help.

Thank you to those who have participated in recent MRC activities:

Disaster Shelter Training

Danielle Cochran	Pete Northcutt	Jennifer Cochran	Heidi Henson
Afton Scott	Sami Swenson	Andrea Booth	Nan Vance
Matt Spraktes	Karin Banks	Jennifer Frudd	Sydney Gates
Judy Arnzen	Terry Fowler	Brenda Krahn	Shari Kuther
Dave Kuther	Susie Bunt		

CPR/First Aid

Anthony Bryson	Paul Guenther	Brian Ringle
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Community Clinics & Screenings

Anthony Bryson	Vickie Browning	Nan Vance
Pat Monger	Karin Banks	Jennifer Cochran



Gritman Medical Center and St. Joseph Regional Medical

Center Exercises

Danielle Cochran, Jennifer Cochran, Susie Bunt & the LCSC Nursing Division

Preparing for Winter Weather

Though winter storms can be difficult to predict far in advance, it is possible to know when they are most likely to occur. Give yourself and your family adequate time to prepare for severe winter weather.

When a winter storm hits, you want to have the following ready:

- The ability to get weather forecasts and storm updates as they are released
- Emergency supplies to keep you and your family warm and safe during a storm
- Home preparations, including for your pipes, roof and indoor comfort
- Car preparations, including antifreeze and ice removal equipment



Family Preparedness Planning Essentials

- Plan on a place to go when a winter storm warning is issued
- Plan for a friend or relative you've designated as your point of contact if you are separated from your family during a severe winter storm
- Plan on a place where family members can meet if you're separated in a storm



Prepare Your Home

- Make sure your home's attic and walls are properly insulated
- Let your faucets drip to prevent freezing water from causing pipes to burst
- Make sure your pipes are properly insulated and leave cabinet doors open around pipes to ensure they receive warmth from the air flowing through your home
- Apply weather stripping to exterior-facing windows and doors, and install storm windows as needed
- Set up emergency heating equipment, such as a fireplace with wood or coal and a camp stove with fuel
- Purchase space heaters as needed and learn how to use them safely
- Learn how to shut off your home's water valves in the event that a pipe breaks

Prepare Your Car

- Check your car's radiator system and have it serviced as needed.
- Check the antifreeze in your car, to make sure you have the right amount and mixture for winter.
- Check your windshield wiper blades and replace your wiper washing fluid with one that's specifically for wintertime driving.
- Check your tires for any worn-down areas or treads.
- If you don't already have them, purchase jumper cables and store them in your car.
- Purchase an ice removal tool and store it in your car, in case your windshield and windows become covered in ice.



For more information on how to prepare for winter preparedness, please go to <http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>.