

California Area Indian Health Service PATIENT NEWSLETTER

*Raising the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of
American Indians and Alaska Natives to the highest level.*



Beverly Miller, M.H.A., M.B.A.

Fall 2017
Volume 9, Issue 4

Director's Message:

Be Prepared For the Next Emergency

Inside This Issue...

Director's Message	P. 1
Flu Season Has Arrived: Are You Protected?	P. 2
Cutting Back on Salt	P. 2-3
Caring for Infants During the Winter	P. 3
Have You Gotten a Pap Smear Lately?	P. 4

Many disasters have taken place and continue to take place all over the U.S. Recently, the California wildfires significantly impacted many of our own native community members and clinics. Because emergencies can occur with little or no warning, it is important to be prepared and develop a plan to keep you and your loved ones safe and comfortable.

Have an emergency plan in place

- Each family member needs to know the safest place to be for each type of disaster your area may face: earthquakes, flooding, fires, etc.
- Teach all children how and when to call 911, and make sure everyone can use a fire extinguisher
- Create an emergency card for each family member to keep in their wallet/bag at all times which includes their name, home address, emergency contact and medical conditions
- Run practice drills with your family for each type of emergency

Create a portable emergency supply kit and consider including the following items:

- Enough food and water for 3 days. The food should be easy to prepare and not expire quickly such as powdered milk, granola bars, nuts, and canned soup (along with a can opener, utensils and garbage bags)
- First Aid Kit and at least 3 days' worth of medications you are taking
- Extra pair of prescription glasses
- Basic toiletries for sanitation
- Books, toys or games for children
- Enough pet food and supplies for 3 days if you have a pet
- An extra change of warm clothes and jackets for everyone in the home
- Cell phone charger, flashlight, portable radio and extra batteries
- Copies of important documents such as your Driver's License, your health and home insurance cards, and medical records
- Extra cash and paper maps
- If you have time, grab your medications, wallet and cell phone

For more detailed information on how to be prepared, please visit the following websites:
https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/EPO/Pages/develop_family_disaster_plan.aspx
<https://www.cdc.gov/phpr/areyouprepared/index.htm>





Flu Season Has Arrived: Are You Protected?

By Susan Ducore, RN, BSN, MSN

Influenza (Flu) is a serious, highly contagious respiratory illness caused by a virus that spreads when people cough, sneeze or even talk. Each year influenza leads to suffering and even death for those who contract it. Persons with influenza can become seriously ill – even those who are young and understood to be in good health. **Influenza vaccination is widely recognized as the best available method of protection against the influenza virus.**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that **everyone age 6 months of age and older be immunized against seasonal influenza. CDC recommends that, unless medically contraindicated, people get a flu vaccination by late October if possible.** Vaccination protects the person immunized AND those around them who cannot receive vaccination due to certain medical conditions or age (i.e. <6 months of age).

Influenza is especially dangerous for individuals who are very young, very old, pregnant, and/or those who have certain medical conditions such as heart and lung disease. **American Indians and Alaska Natives are evidenced to be among those at higher risk of flu complications.** Since Influenza is contagious and easily spread, it is **especially** important that caregivers and/or family members of individuals who are identified as being at “elevated risk” are immunized annually.

Those who have the flu virus frequently experience **one or more** of the following **Signs and Symptoms**:

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Sore throat
- Muscle or body aches
- Fatigue (very tired)
- Cough
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Headaches
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults



If you are experiencing the above symptoms and are concerned that you may have the flu, please **contact your primary healthcare provider** immediately for guidance.

In addition to getting a flu vaccination, you can help **prevent the spread of germs**, including influenza viruses, by covering your sneezes and coughs, washing hands often, and by staying home if you are sick.

If you haven't received your annual “flu” vaccination for this year, please take the opportunity to do so today! If you have questions as to the benefits of immunization, please talk with your healthcare provider. **By getting immunized against seasonal Influenza, you are protecting yourself, your family, and members of your community!**

For additional Information, please visit the following websites:
Frequently Asked Questions: <https://www.ihs.gov/forpatients/healthtopics/influenza/faq/>

American Indians, Alaska Natives, and the Flu: <https://www.cdc.gov/Features/aianflu/index.html>

Cutting Back on Salt

By Beverly Calderon, MS, RDN, CDE



Salt, or sodium chloride, is essential to a healthy diet in the right amounts. Salt helps the body maintain its fluid balance and helps prevent foods from spoiling. The body uses salt to help nerves and muscles function, send electrical impulses throughout our body and even breakdown proteins and absorb minerals. Unfortunately, eating too much salt can lead to high blood pressure, which can lead to other health problems including kidney and eye damage.

It might seem surprising, but only about 10% of the salt we consume is naturally in what we eat and drink. Around 75% of our daily salt intake comes from manufacturers adding salt to processed foods and from salt that gets added to meals at restaurants, fast food chains or at home. Dietary guidelines published by the United States Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Agriculture show that nearly all Americans are consuming more salt than they need. Current guidelines recommend consuming less than 2.3 grams (2,300mg) per day for most people.

Here are some suggestions on how to cut back on your daily salt intake :

#1: Cook from scratch using the least amount of processed foods as possible to limit the salt content in meals. Processed foods almost always have increased amounts of salt to help extend their shelf life.

#2: Go for low-sodium or sodium-free products when buying processed foods, whenever possible. Then, add herbs, spices, vinegars or lemon juice as salt alternatives. Be aware that salt substitutes often contain potassium because it mimics the flavor of salt, but excessive potassium intake can be harmful for people with kidney disease and other health conditions.

#3: Steer clear of instant foods because sodium chloride and other sodium containing compounds are used as preservatives. Check the amount of sodium on the nutrition labels and eat only one cup or one packet to avoid consuming excessive amounts of salt.

#4: Avoid salty foods when eating out. Menu nutrition information can help you find healthier meal options. You can also request food to be prepared without added salt and order sauces and dressing on the side.

Caring for Infants During the Winter

By Rachel Harvey, MPS

Winter months are often accompanied by colder weather that requires parents to take action in order to keep infants warm and safe. Here are some tips to care for your infant during cold winter months:

- **Stay indoors with your baby on cold days** when possible, but be sure to take advantage of warmer days by spending time outside. Even a short walk outside may help the baby get vitamin D from the sun, release some energy, and ultimately sleep better.
- **Make sure you and other adults close to the baby are immunized** against Influenza and Pertussis, or Whooping Cough. Infants younger than 6 months cannot be immunized against these diseases, which are especially harmful to them. Pertussis, or Whooping Cough, may appear as cold-like symptoms for older children, but can cause a baby to stop breathing.
- **Apply sunscreen to your baby's exposed skin** when outdoors because your baby can become sunburned even on cloudy days.
- **Make sure your home is prepared for winter months**, when household fires are more common. Install fire alarms and carbon monoxide alarms.
- **Use a humidifier in the baby's room** to combat the dry air that is often a result of colder weather. Dry air can affect the baby's skin and leave them susceptible for infection.
- **Don't bathe your baby as often during the winter.** Although warm baths sound like a great way to keep warm, the baby may shake and shiver when removed from the bath, and too many baths can dry out the baby's skin.
- **Remove blankets and other items from the baby's crib** as these items increase the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Instead of leaving blankets in the crib, swaddle your baby.
- **Dress your baby in warm clothing when outdoors**, using layers that can be removed when in warmer places indoors. A general rule is to dress your baby in the same number of layers that keep you warm outdoors, and then add an extra layer to them. Use hats and mittens to ensure the infant's head and hands are covered. Remove any drawstrings from the baby's clothing to prevent choking.
- **Remove bulky clothing when putting your baby in his/her car seat** because the straps are meant to press tightly against your baby's body. As an alternative to bulky clothing, secure the infant in the car seat in his/her regular clothing and then wrap a blanket around the outside of the straps and car seat.
- **Monitor your baby's temperature.** Know the signs of frostbite and hypothermia, including pale, grey or blistered skin and shivering. Also, check for overheating, especially at naptime and when using a heater or fireplace.
- **Don't miss appointments with your baby's pediatrician.** Many parents are weary about taking their baby out of the house during cold weather and flu season, but it is important to allow your pediatrician to monitor your baby's health and give them any needed immunizations.

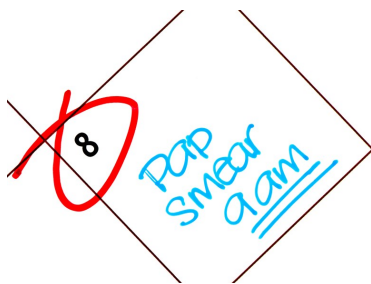


For more information about keeping your family safe this winter, visit:
<https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/duringstorm/indoorsafety.html>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2794526/>

Have You Gotten A Pap Smear Lately?

By Amy Patterson, PhD



Nobody looks forward to a Pap smear, but it can save your life. Every year almost 13,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer in the U.S. and over 4,000 will die of the disease. Since the Pap smear was introduced as a routine procedure back in the 1940s, the death rate from cervical cancer has gone down by over 60%. Regular pap screening is now recommended for all women between the ages of 21-65.

During a Pap screening test, the provider collects a sample of cells from the cervix. The cervix is the opening to the uterus and is located at the top of the vagina. The provider then puts the cells into a special liquid and sends it to a laboratory for testing. The lab determines if there are any abnormal changes to the cervical cells.

Cervical cancer occurs when abnormal cells grow out of control. It usually takes 3 to 7 years for abnormal changes in cervical cells to become cancer. When caught at an early stage, the chances of surviving cervical cancer are very good which is why regular pap screening is so important.

HPV and Cervical Cancer

You may also have heard about a link between the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) and cervical cancer. HPV is a very common infection that is passed during sexual activity, and most people who are sexually active will get an HPV infection in their lifetime. HPV infection often causes no symptoms and goes away on its own. But there is a high-risk type of HPV infection that lasts for a long time, and it can cause more severe changes in cervical cells and lead to cervical cancer. Some types of HPV have also been linked to cancer of the vagina, penis, anus, mouth, and throat.

Because HPV infection is very common, it is also common to have an abnormal Pap smear result, but that does not mean that you have cancer. If you do get an abnormal result, your provider will most likely ask you to come back for another Pap test in 6-12 months to see if the cells have returned to normal, or do additional types of testing, including the HPV test, which specifically screens for the most common high-risk forms of HPV.

How often should you get a Pap screening?

- Women aged 21–29 years should have a Pap smear every 3 years
- Women aged 30–65 years should have a Pap smear and an HPV test together every 5 years, or just a Pap smear every 3 years
- Women over age 65 can stop having Pap smears depending on their personal health history and previous test results
- Women who have had a hysterectomy may still need Pap smears, depending on whether their cervix was removed, and why they had the procedure. Some cervical cells can remain at the top of the vagina for up to 20 years after a hysterectomy.

Also note that if you have received the HPV vaccine you should still follow these screening recommendations.

To get the most accurate results from your Pap/HPV tests, try to schedule your test when you are not having your period. Also, for 48 hours before your test do not:

- Use a tampon
- Douche (rinse the vagina with water or other fluids)
- Have sex
- Use birth control foam, cream, or jelly
- Use any medications/creams in your vagina

The HPV Vaccine

The HPV vaccine is highly effective in preventing infections by two types of HPV responsible for approximately 70% of cervical cancer cases. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all children age 11 or 12 years old should get the three-dose series of HPV vaccine to protect against HPV, so they are protected before ever being exposed to the virus. It also recommends vaccination of older teen boys and girls who do not start or finish the HPV vaccine series when they were younger. The HPV vaccine is available to young women through age 26 and young men through age 21. The vaccine is also recommended for any man who has sex with men through age 26, and for men with compromised immune systems (including HIV) through age 26 if they did not get the HPV vaccine when they were younger.



Indian Health Service/California Area Office
650 Capitol Mall, Suite 7-100, Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (916) 930-3927 | <http://www.ihs.gov/california>

