

HEALTHWORKS

A publication of the Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance Health Task Force in partnership with the Williamsburg Community Health Foundation

January is a great time to get your Flu Shot

employer WELLNESS PROFILE:

James City County's Working Towards Wellness Program

Work within James City County departments can be physically and emotionally demanding at times. Concerned for the health and well-being of our employees and faced with ever increasing health insurance costs, James City County recognizes that a healthy and fit employee is able to perform the physical tasks of the position in a more efficient manner, and experiences fewer on the job injuries and overall illnesses, resulting in lower workers' compensation and healthcare costs. Also, a healthy and



fit employee has greater job satisfaction, lower turnover and inspires confidence in other employees and the public.

One of the foundations of this program is access to the WJCC Community Center at no cost to the employee as well as a discounted fee, payable through payroll deduction, for the employee's family. Upon completion of a Health Risk Appraisal and Fitness Assessment, the employee receives a Personal Profile that

includes an assessment of the results and recommendations for making improvements.

Other programs, seminars and activities offered include free flu shots to all employees, smoking cessation courses, blood pressure and cholesterol screenings, lunchtime Pilates, Healthy Life weigh sessions and WalkAbout program in conjunction with Sentara, Lunch & Learn sessions and more.

“The County has seen a three-year reduction in workplace injuries.”

Results have been impressive:

- In 2003, Working Toward Wellness received an Achievement Award from The National Association of Counties
- The County has seen a three-year reduction in workplace injuries
- Health costs actually declined last fiscal year
- Participants in last Spring's "Look At Us Now" Body Mass Index reduction contest lost a total of 492 pounds
- Employees report enjoying the camaraderie of exercising together, competing in wellness contests, sharing recipes and positive lifestyle changes

Results don't happen overnight and are not based on one particular program offering. It takes a repeated effort to educate people to make changes that will last a lifetime. **HW**

If you know of a successful employer wellness program, please contact Kerry Mellette, Chair of the Health Task Force at kmellette@wchf.com.

Flu Facts

- Some 36,000 deaths each year are attributed to complications of seasonal flu.
- Health officials recommend you stay home when sick with the flu.
- If children are ill with the flu, keep them home from school.
- Wash your hands before and after eating and after using the restroom, and teach your family members to do the same.
- Use disinfectants to wipe off common surfaces like doorknobs.
- The most deadly flu pandemic was in 1918. Some 675,000 people in the U.S. lost their lives. Businesses, churches and schools in Virginia were closed.



Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Where to get flu shots in Williamsburg, James City and York Counties

Always consult your family physician regarding questions you may have about vaccines. Once you've decided to reduce your risk for seasonal flu, there are a number of pharmacies in our area that offer flu shots.

Ukrops – Walk-Ins M-F 10 a.m.-5 p.m. (Flu Hotline 804.340.3015)

CVS – By appointment M-F 4-7 p.m.
Farm Fresh – Walk-Ins M-F 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; 7 p.m.-8 p.m.

Virginia Department of Health, Newport News – Walk-Ins Tues, Wed, Thurs 8-10:30 a.m. and 1-3:30 p.m.

Olde Towne Medical Center – Flu shots can be obtained anytime.



January/February

HEALTH ADVISOR:

Shane H. Peng, M.D., CCFP
Vice President & Senior
Medical Director, Sentara



I recommend frequent hand washing with soap or an antiseptic solution.

Q What can employers do to help staff avoid getting the flu?

A The workplace is a common location where people contract and spread influenza. Employees can bring the disease home, and should be encouraged to be immunized. Employers should consider offering an in-house flu clinic or time off for employees to get a shot. Employees with the flu must be allowed to stay home so they do not spread the disease. Also,

Q Are there any flu myths that employers should debunk amongst their staff?

A One is that you cannot contract influenza from the flu shot. The flu vaccine is

not a live virus and cannot be contracted. It is possible to get flu-like symptoms for a few days; however, this is rare and it is not the flu.

Q What do physicians think of antiviral medications to fight the flu?

A Flu shots are not 100% effective. The antiviral medicines offer some

improvement of flu symptoms by reducing the duration and severity of the disease. The important thing is that it must be taken within 48 hours of the onset of symptoms to be most effective. If you have symptoms, get yourself tested to see if you have the flu. If you test positive, an antiviral medication may be appropriate. Antiviral medications can also help the family from catching the flu.

Q What do doctor's offices do to safeguard the health of their staff (nurses, clinicians and administrative people) during flu season?

A All healthcare providers are at high risk for contracting and transmitting the virus; therefore, every healthcare worker should be immunized. **HW**

avoid Getting or Spreading the Flu

The medical community recognizes November through April as peak flu season. Flu is a contagious respiratory disease caused by an influenza virus that can vary from year to year. Each year more than 200,000 people are hospitalized with seasonal flu. Symptoms range from fever, cough, sore throat and muscle aches to eye infections, pneumonia and severe respiratory distress.

Those at most risk for seasonal flu include people who are:

- pregnant
- between six months and five years of age
- over 65

- individuals with chronic medical conditions such as heart or lung disease, asthma and diabetes
- living with a weakened immune system as a result of HIV or other conditions
- living in a nursing home or other long-term care facility
- living with a nerve or muscle disorder such as severe cerebral palsy or seizure disorder

There are steps you can take to safeguard your health, and that of your family and colleagues.

The top three things you can do to avoid getting or spreading the flu:

- Wash your hands often
- Cover your cough and sneeze in the crook of your arm
- Get a flu shot **HW**

Source: Virginia Department of Health



Types of Flu

Seasonal Flu A contagious respiratory disease caused by an influenza virus; strains can vary from year to year.

Avian Flu Refers to a single strain of influenza virus H5N1; strains can be carried by wild birds and may make domesticated birds sick.

Pandemic Flu A global outbreak of severe influenza. The federal government has the lead to produce a vaccine against a new pandemic strain should there be a world-wide flu emergency.

For more facts, visit the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) at www.vdh.virginia.gov or www.vdh.virginia.gov/pandemicflu or call 1.800.CDC.INFO.

Coming in 2009: **Stress Management**