

Flu Season is Here: Are You Prepared?

Influenza is a contagious and unpredictable virus that visits us every year, and each year it arrives in a new form. It is spread mainly from person to person by coughing, sneezing, or speaking with someone who has the flu. The virus may also spread by touching something with the virus on it, and then touching your mouth, eyes, or nose. People who have the flu can infect others one day before their symptoms develop, and for up to a week (or more) after becoming ill.

Myths about the flu are everywhere. According to many experts, misconceptions about the flu and flu vaccine are as hard to contain and fight as the virus itself.

Here are the top 5 flu myths:

Flu Myth #1: The seasonal flu is harmless.”

Fact: The flu is much worse than a severe cold; flu kills 36,000 Americans every year.

Flu Myth #2: The flu vaccine can give you the flu.

Fact: You can't get the flu from the flu vaccine. The injected flu vaccine



contains only dead, inactive viruses. Some people may get minor body aches, headaches or a low-grade fever after receiving their vaccine, but this is not the flu.

Flu Myth #3: Antibiotics can fight the flu.

Fact: Antibiotics only fight bacterial infections. Flu is caused by a virus.

Flu Myth #4: If you've had the flu, you can't get it again.

Fact: There are many flu virus strains and you can get the flu even if you'd had it in the past. The strains that appear are different each year.

Flu Myth #5: Getting a flu shot is all you need to do to protect yourself from the flu.

Fact: That's the best defense, but also wash your hands frequently, cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and try to avoid those who are sick.

This year, starting December 15, if an employee is not vaccinated against the influenza virus, they will wear a mask while performing patient care during flu season. We strongly believe that disease

prevention is every employee's responsibility. If they are vaccinated, they will have a blue dot on their employee badge.

So what are you waiting for? Get your vaccine today!

Drop-In Flu Clinic

Where: Medical Practice (Bldg. 200, 1st Floor)

When: Monday – Friday (except for federal holidays) from 8:30 a.m. – 12 noon, and 12:30 – 4 p.m.

You can also receive a vaccine during a regularly scheduled medical appointment.

New Education Benefit for Vets

The Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP), has already accepted over 71,000 applications since its announcement in May. This is an exciting opportunity for eligible, unemployed Veterans aged 35-60.

The program will stop taking applications on Oct. 1, 2013, or when it reaches 99,000 participants, whichever comes first.

The VRAP offers 12 months of training assistance to Veterans who:

- Are at least 35 but no more than 60 years old.
- Are unemployed on the date of application.
- Received an other than dishonorable discharge.
- Are not be eligible for any other VA education benefit program (e.g.: the Post-9/11 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Assistance).
- Are not in receipt of VA compensation due to unemployability.
- Are not enrolled in a federal or state job training program.

For more information visit:
www.benefits.va.gov/vow/education.htm.

Dental Service Remodel Coming Soon!



The SFVAMC Dental Clinic, located on the 1st floor of Bldg 200, is set to undergo a long awaited remodel starting December 3, 2012. It

is anticipated that the remodel will last about 6 months. During that time, half of the clinic will be unavailable for use. Because of this, we will have very limited ability to accommodate walk-in patients and

dental emergencies. Patients with severe infections, fractures, and pathology will be given priority for emergencies.

In addition, we will be looking to expand our hours, to include a limited number of Saturday clinics.

We are looking forward to this project and having a modern clinic with improved patient flow and privacy. Thank you in advance for your understanding with scheduling and any treatment delays during this time.

Resources

Billing Office
(866) 347-2353

Mental Health/Substance Abuse
(415) 750-6674

OEF/OIF/OND Program
(415) 221-4810 x4405

Pharmacy (Auto Refill)
(415) 750-2233

Telephone Linked Care
(800) 733-0502

Veterans Crisis Line
(800) 273-8255 (Press #1)

Farmer's Market Staying Open

SFVAMC's Farmer's Market, which is open every Wednesday from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., has been a big success. Because of its success, the Market will be staying on throughout the winter months. They will be closed for the holidays beginning December 19, but will re-open on January 9!

The Market is located on the grassy triangular area on Fort Miley Circle, and sells fresh fruit, vegetables, nuts, baked goods, and even flowers and plants.

