TOOLBOX TALKS

Flu Season Prevention and Safety Tips

The cold and flu season is upon us once again so protect yourself and stay healthy! Colds and flus are viruses, living microorganisms that are easily spread from surfaces or person-to-person through contact.

Here are a few tips to help avoid getting or spreading the flu:

- **Get a flu shot!** The flu vaccine will not give you the flu. The vaccine will ward off several strains of the flu, or at least reduce the effects of symptoms for strains that are not covered (should you still get sick).
- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing and sneezing.
- Cough and sneeze into a tissue if possible. Wash your hands afterward with soap and water (for at least 30 seconds) or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- If you have a sudden sneeze, turn away from others and sneeze into your arm or elbow, not your hands.
- Avoid touching your face with your hands, especially after shaking hands with others at social events, or touching different surfaces. Wash or sanitize your hands after touching other objects.
- Disinfect any shared surfaces (like phones, keyboards, doorknobs, steering wheels) frequently. Viruses can live on surfaces for several hours.
- Get plenty of sleep. Your immune system does its best work while you're sleeping.
- Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water, and avoid alcohol and caffeine.
- Eat healthy, nutritious food. 5-9 servings per day of fruits and vegetables is the recommended intake.

Know the symptoms. An easy way to know that you have the flu and not a cold is that you'll have a fever and muscle aches. If you do get the flu, see a medical provider for treatment.

Antiviral Drugs are prescription medications used to treat flu, and are not sold over-the-counter (you will need a prescription).

Antiviral drugs are different from Antibiotics, which fight against bacterial infections. Antibiotics will not kill cold or flu viruses, and could make your condition worse if taken inappropriately.