

Parish Health News... Influenza

Have you had your flu shot? Yes, I'm also talking to you Pastor Mike. Taking a few minutes to stop in for a flu vaccine could save you from missing days of work, passing illness on to loved ones and generally feeling miserable. Not everyone should get a flu vaccine; that is a good conversation to have with your own physician. For most of us, though, the vaccine is a very good idea.



The vaccine is not the only way to protect yourself from the flu. One of the most important things to remember is to stay away from sick people. That isn't always possible, though, is it? Even going to the grocery store can expose you to the coughers and the sneezers lurking in the aisles. In fact, you may not even see the person who gifts you with this illness. It could be the last person who touched a doorknob, for instance. That brings me to another point. Handwashing!



Wash your hands well. Take your time. Your health is worth a good 20 second wash. Go around each finger and on the backs of your hands. Don't ignore your fingernails. This may save you from other illness as well, such as the common cold. Also, remember to keep your hands off your face! Don't give those little germs a ride to your mouth!

The thing about the flu is this. It may make one person miserable for several days but it could be extremely dangerous for others such as the very young, the elderly and someone with underlying health concerns. It can result in seizures in young children. It can lead to a deadly pneumonia in someone with a weakened immune system.

If you suspect you have the flu, please try to stay home so as to reduce the spread. The symptoms of flu often come on quite suddenly and can go on for many days. These symptoms may include a fever accompanied by chills. Generally muscle aches are part of the misery. Additionally you may have a sore throat, cough, runny nose, sneezing and often a headache. Sometimes vomiting and diarrhea get in on the act. Influenza is usually more dramatic than a simple cold. Wrap all those symptoms up in a cloak of extreme fatigue and it is not a pretty picture.



So, consider getting a flu vaccine if you've not already done so. It may not just be yourself you protect, but also all with whom you come in contact. Instead of gifting them with the influenza virus, just give them a nice smile. It is the kind thing to do.

Sue Struck, RN

