

Thursday, September 25, 2008

Graham Health Center to offer flu vaccinations

By Eric Reikowski, media relations assistant

The flu vaccine is the single best way to reduce the chances of infection during flu season. Throughout October, Graham Health Center (GHC) will offer flu vaccinations Thursday mornings from 8:30-11 a.m. The cost is \$15. Individuals can also get vaccinated at the upcoming OU Benefits and Wellness Fair on Wednesday, Oct. 29, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Banquet Rooms of the Oakland Center.

People interested in getting flu shots at GHC or the Wellness Fair should check with their health insurance provider to determine whether the cost of the flu shot is covered.

Joanne Talarek, director of GHC, emphasizes the importance of flu vaccination. "Some flu seasons are worse than others," she said. "Since the last few years have been relatively mild, we may be due for a more severe flu season this year."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advocates good health habits, such as hand-washing, covering one's cough and avoiding close contact to prevent the spread of germs. A nutritious diet, proper rest and physical activity can also reduce the risk of getting sick.

The CDC lists several groups who are especially vulnerable to the flu, including children aged six months and older, pregnant women, people aged 50 and older, people with compromised immune systems or certain chronic health conditions, and people who live or work with others facing high risk of flu complications.

The flu vaccine has not been approved for children less than six months old. Individuals who are allergic to eggs should be administered a special form of flu vaccine that can be safely inhaled, Talarek said.

Talarek also noted that while the flu vaccine cannot cause the flu, in some cases, it can cause side effects. She cites muscle aches and fatigue as normal symptoms following a flu vaccination and recommends Tylenol and plenty of fluids to help minimize discomfort.

For more information on the flu vaccine, visit the **OU Infection Prevention and Control Committee** Web site or call GHC at (248) 370-2341.

SUMMARY

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