



health happenings



3 Reasons to Get an Early Flu Shot This Year

By Laura Del Guerra, RD, CDE, Take Control Health Coach

Tuesday after Labor Day, as I picked up a prescription at the pharmacy, I got a flu shot. I typically never think about getting vaccinated before mid-October, and some years I have even skipped getting vaccinated. However, there is nothing typical about 2020. Getting an early flu vaccination is more important this year than ever. Here are three reasons why:

#1: Help prevent a “twindemic.” This term was coined in August and refers to a threat of both COVID and flu cases rising together during fall and winter. As a nation, we are trying to prevent this from happening. Early flu vaccinations will hopefully blunt this effect, with a goal of decreasing hospitalizations from the flu and preserving critical hospital beds for those with COVID.

#2: Protect your COVID social bubble. Over the past six months, most of us have developed a “quarantine bubble” – the limited group of people we socialize with that balances the need for social and emotional interactions, while minimizing the risk of getting COVID. Your small group may contain a wide age range, or people with a chronic medical condition. Your vaccination will not only protect you, but will help protect those in your bubble who are at higher risk of getting the flu.

#3: It’s harder to find. With many of us still working from home, the flu shot will be less accessible this year. There will likely be no opportunity to get vaccinated at work, and large community vaccination events that normally occur are not being held. So, it is important to take the initiative to get vaccinated as soon as possible.

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Fall 2020

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2020 Wellness Season is Wrapping Up

Wellness season is wrapping up, but if you got a Health Screening, there is still time to earn another \$50 by doing a Health Screening Review call with a Take Control Health Coach. Scheduling your call is as easy as 1, 2, 3!

1. Once you get your Health Screening results, go to www.mmiaeb.net/wellness.
2. Click on "Schedule Call" in the Health Screening Review box.
3. Pick a time and day for your call and answer the phone when your coach calls!

A few things to know about the Health Screening Review call:

- Calls must be completed by November 6. Slots are subject to availability.
- Only a call with a Take Control Health Coach scheduled through www.mmiaeb.net/wellness will count for this incentive.
- Calls take about 15 minutes.
- If you miss your scheduled call, you will only have one chance to reschedule it. Slots are subject to availability.



80% Employee Participation

As with every year, employee participation in the Health Screenings will be calculated in early October. Check www.mmiaeb.net/wellness for a list of cities and towns that achieved the 80% Employee Participation goal. Everybody from those cities or towns will earn a \$50 incentive.

Getting your incentive money this year:

Remember, we're going back to VISA gift cards this year. Watch for a notice from your clerk or HR letting you know your gift card is in. You will need to call and activate your card before use. Keep track of your 16-digit card number so you can replace it if it is lost or stolen.

Flu Shot continued from front page

A word about side effects. If you avoid the vaccine because you feel like it gives you the flu, there's reason to re-think your choice. According to several experts, the vaccination simply cannot cause the flu. The flu shot is a killed virus and contains the part needed for your body to mount a response to the flu. If you experience headache, fever, soreness at the injection site, or sore muscles, this is your body working exactly as it should. It is hard at work developing an immune response to the antigens. That slight flu-like feeling is your body's way of saying, "I'm ready for the flu." Fortunately, most people don't experience any of these side effects at all!

It's important to keep in mind that the flu shot is not a guarantee, rather it is scientists' best guess



about which strains of flu will be circulating this year. It takes about two weeks for immunity to set in. If you are vaccinated and happen to get the flu, you most certainly will have a milder case.

Vaccinations are widely available right now in pharmacies and supermarkets throughout Montana. They are also covered 100% under your MMIA health plan's preventive benefit. So, make a plan to get vaccinated now. The last thing you and those you care about need is a case of COVID on top of the flu.

Take Control Mini Course: Navigating Life's Challenges with Resilience

It's no secret that 2020 has been a tough year. COVID has had an impact on everybody, but there are ways you can take charge to cope better. Our Disease Management vendor, Take Control, has put together an on-demand video Mini Course about resilience, which is the ability to successfully recover from difficulties ranging from everyday challenges and stresses, to some of the most traumatic events. Learning skills to cope with hardships will help you adapt over time, transform difficulties into personal growth, and eventually recover as much as possible.

In this 15-minute video you will learn:

- The definition of resilience
- Four steps to build resilience before you need it
- Four strategies to implement when hardship strikes
- When to seek outside help, and
- Why it's important to bounce back.

Take Control has included resources specific to MMIA's EAP and work-life services at the end. Check it out at our website at www.mmiaeb.net.



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About the Presenter

Shannon Jones is the Lead Health Coach at Take Control. She has over twenty years of experience help gin others with health and fitness goals. Shannon holds a bachelor of science in Health Education, is a nationally Certified fitness instructor, and an AFFA Certified Personal Trainer. Additionally, she is trained in Mindful Meditation. Shanon is passionate about motivating people regardless of where they're starting on their health journey.



Shannon Jones

Medicare Part D Notice

As your medical plan administrator, we are required to notify participants of the Medicare Creditable Coverage Disclosure. This notice informs you that the MMIA drug coverage plans we currently offer are creditable. This means that the MMIA prescription drug coverage is, on average expected to pay out as much as standard Medicare prescription drug coverage pays. This information can help you decide whether or not you want to join a Medicare drug plan. If you are considering joining a Medicare drug plan, you should compare your current coverage, including which drugs are covered at what cost, with the coverage and costs of the plans offering Medicare prescription drug coverage in your area.

Please visit the Employee Benefits section of our website at www.mmiaEB.net/forms/notices to access this notice or call us at 1-800-635-3089 to request a copy by mail.





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