

Get Vaccinated Against the Flu during National Influenza Vaccination Week

Give yourself the gift of health this holiday season

State public health officials are encouraging Kentuckians to get a flu vaccination during National Influenza Vaccination Week, Dec. 4-10, to reduce the spread of illness this holiday season.

“Getting a flu vaccine is a holiday gift you can give now to yourself and your family,” said Steve Davis, M.D., acting commissioner of the Kentucky Department for Public Health (DPH). “Many people visit relatives with small children or those at high risk of complications from flu around this time of year. Getting a flu vaccine is an opportunity to protect against the flu’s spread and severity.”

National Influenza Vaccination Week is a week-long observation that serves as a reminder to those people who have not yet received a flu vaccine that the time to get vaccinated continues into winter – through January or later, when flu season typically peaks. Throughout the week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will highlight the importance of vaccinations for those people at high risk, their close contacts and all those who want to be protected against the flu. In addition, good health habits such as washing hands often with soap and water, avoiding touching your eyes, nose or mouth and staying home from work or school when sick will also be emphasized.

The CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends flu vaccine for all individuals older than 6 months of age. People who should especially receive the flu vaccine because they may be at higher risk for complications or negative consequences include:

- Children age 6 months to 19 years;
- Pregnant women;
- People 50 years old or older;
- People of any age with chronic health problems;
- People who live in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities;
- Health care workers;
- Caregivers of or people who live with a person at high risk for complications from the flu; and
- Out-of-home caregivers of or people who live with children less than 6 months old.

Kentuckians should receive a new flu vaccination each season for optimal protection. Healthy, non-pregnant people age 2-49 years can be vaccinated with either the flu shot or the nasal vaccine spray. Children younger than 9 years old who did not receive a flu vaccination during the last flu season should receive a second dose four or more weeks after their first vaccination.

Infection with the flu virus can cause fever, headache, cough, sore throat, runny nose, sneezing and body aches. Flu is a very contagious disease caused by the flu virus, which spreads from person to person. Approximately 23,000 deaths due to seasonal flu and its complications occur on average each year in the U.S., according to recently updated estimates from the CDC. However, actual numbers of deaths vary from year to year.

For more information on influenza or the availability of flu vaccine, please contact your local health department or visit healthalerts.ky.gov.

DCBS Offices Celebrate Adoption Awareness Month

By Anya Armes Weber

Several Department for Community Based Services offices across the state sponsored adoption events last month.

Gov. Steve Beshear proclaimed November Adoption Awareness Month as a time to recognize adoptive families and promote recruitment for prospective parents.

Along with their judicial partners and other advocates, many local offices coordinated "Adoption Days."

In 2004, former Chief Justice Joseph Lambert challenged Kentucky family courts to hold a statewide adoption day to finalize as many adoptions as possible and raise awareness about children in foster care.

The goals of Adoption Day are to encourage others to adopt and foster children; to build collaboration among local adoption agencies and organizations; and to communicate the availability and need for post-adoptive services.

In Jefferson County, 25 families welcomed new members today when the adoptions of 38 children were finalized as part of Louisville Adoption Day. The families took part in a reception where children received books and gifts.

Other participating counties include the following:

- Hardin County DCBS staff celebrated eight adoptions that were finalized at their Adoption Day on Nov. 22.
- Nelson County's DCBS office hosted Adoption Day on Nov. 16, and seven adoptions were finalized.
- Oldham County Adoption Day, hosted by that county's DCBS office, was Nov. 18. Four adoptions were finalized that day, and there was a celebration of the county's 20 adoptions in 2011.

Focus Newsletter
Dec. 5, 2011

Diane Underwood, manager of the Adoption Services Branch in the CHFS Department for Community Based Services said all adoptive parents are champions for their children.

“These are amazing families who have opened their hearts to incredible children,” she said. “Today we can celebrate the start of the newest chapters in their lives. They have found their ‘forever families.’”

State employees may receive special financial assistance for adopting. For more information about adoption, log on to <http://chfs.ky.gov/snap>. Call (800) 232-KIDS to request an information packet.

CHFS exceeds KECC Goal

This year, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services not only met its 2011 KECC goal, it led the entire state in contributions.

Most recent figures total CHFS 2011 pledges at approximately \$182,053. That number exceeds the Cabinet’s goal by 10.5 percent. This is the first in several years when the Cabinet has met its goal. Contributions for all state employees in this year’s campaign totaled more than \$1.1 million.

The Cabinet also won the 2011 KECC Spirit Award for extraordinary achievement and spectacular results. This year the Cabinet increased its total number of contributors by more than 20 percent, almost 300 new givers.

In addition, the Cabinet took home the coveted “Key Campaign” award. This award is given to the top three Cabinets that garnered the most donations. CHFS came in first, followed by the Transportation Cabinet and then the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet. The three agencies combined raised almost 40 percent of the entire amount pledged.

WSCA Copier Service/Supplies Contract Change

Effective Nov. 1, 2011, OfficeWare transferred service on the Cabinet’s WSCA contracted Ricoh/Lanier/Savin devices to IKON Office Solutions. For service and supplies, employees should now contact Ricoh Americas Corporation by calling (800) 432-9787. After the initial call for service to this number, a service technician will update the contact number on the machine with a new service tag for use for all future service calls.

If you are unsure if your current device is on the WSCA contract, contact:
Raven Coley: (502) 564-7736 x3262, RavenM.Coley@ky.gov
Jennifer Washabaugh: (502) 564-7736 x4062, Jennifer.Washabaugh@ky.gov.

Holiday Wellness Tip: Plan Ahead

By Anya Armes Weber

Keep wellness in mind during the holidays with these tips brought to you by the CHFS Wellness Committee. This is the first in a series of wellness tips you'll find weekly in the Focus.

By planning ahead during the holidays, you can avoid some potential pitfalls to your wellness. Here are some suggestions:

Make sure you have menu options at gatherings. Bring a healthy dish to your office party or family potluck.

Don't go shopping on an empty stomach. Eat before you leave or pack some baby carrots or fruit in your bag.

Plan your diet splurge. Budget calories throughout the day so you can afford to spend a few more at the party.

Make time for physical activity. If you know you'll be visiting with family all day, get up a little earlier to fit in a workout or walk.

Get enough rest. Stay focused by getting seven to eight hours of sleep every night.

Employee Enrichment

By Anya Armes Weber

Do you always have a lot on your plate at work? If multitasking makes you feel like you're doing a lot of work but not very well, take heed from Harvard Business Review writer and author Ron Ashkenas. He says to focus on "value, not volume."

Ashkenas writes that to make a real impact, we should focus less on checking off every box on our to-do lists than looking at the activities that will truly add value to our work.

One way to determine if you're multitasking well is to ask yourself at the end of each day how valuable your work was instead of how much you got done. This subtle shift might provide a better way to get quality work done in a limited amount of time.