USNH Yokosuka influenza immunization clinics schedule

Story and photo by Ben Avey, USNH Yokosuka Public Affairs

U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Yokosuka has scheduled three separate seasonal influenza (flu) immunization clinics on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka and its housing detachments in Ikego and Negishi ahead of the upcoming flu season.

The clinics will immunize family members, civilians and contractors who are eligible for care at the hospital.

Immunization for active duty service members will be held during command specific clinics.

Immunization remains the best method to prevent both the catching of and spreading of the flu.

Since last year, the vaccine has been improved and now includes protection against the two most common strains of seasonal flu as well as the H1N1 virus.

The 2010 flu immunization clinic schedule is as follows:

- Oct. 12 from 1 to 6 p.m. in the Ikego Elementary School multi-purpose room
- Oct. 13 from 3 to 8 p.m. in the Negishi Movie Theatre
- Oct. 14-15 from noon to 6 p.m. in the Nile C. Kinnick High School cafeteria

The immunization will be available and administered in both the nasal spray FluMist and the traditional flu shot.

The flu shot is given with a needle, usually in the arm. FluMist is a nasal spray approved for use in healthy people 2 to 49 years of age who are not pregnant.

Most beneficiaries between ages 2 and 49 will receive the Flumist unless the person does not qualify due to an allergy or medical condition.

To learn about influenza, the vaccine and its benefits, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at http://www.cdc.gov/flu.For specific information about immunization clinics in Yokosuka, contact the USNH Yokosuka Immunization Department at 243-9840.

USNH Yokosuka Commanding Officer Capt. Stephen Pachuta self administers the nasal spray flu immunization FluMist® during an immunization clinic Sept. 17. Immunization is the best method to prevent catching and spreading the flu. Flu immunization clinics will be held in Yokosuka Oct. 14-15, Ikego Oct. 12 and Negishi Oct. 13.

For preschoolers, food choices, good eating habits is elementary

By Alexis D. Washington,
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For preschoolers, the food choices made during the ages of three to five are not only important in the fight against obesity, but they are critical for healthy brain development. Along with continued physical growth, the National Institute of Health (NIH) reports that it is during these years children demonstrate curiosity and learn to socialize, adapt to different places and speak properly. It's also when parents can set rules for good behaviors, preferences toward learning, and teach healthy eating habits. Poor nutrition at this stage can lead to long-term cognitive or behavioral disabilities.

After the age of two, the NIH recommends that a child's diet be moderately low in fat, as diets high in fat may contribute to heart disease, obesity and other health problems later in life. "The Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System" reports that, the prevalence of obesity among children ages two up to five years was 14.7 percent in 2009.

At birth, a child's brain is unfinished. There are 100 billion cells unconnected to each other. When cells communicate with each other, the brain makes connections and develops. In the first decade of life, a child's brain forms trillions of synapses (connections). The more a child experiences, the more connections are formed. It is at the preschool stage that a child's ability to think and reason develops tremendously. In these years, children learn their letters, counting, and colors, as well as how to better interact with the world around them.

Learning abilities and concentration spans of malnourished children are significantly lower than properly nourished children. Cognitive development is delayed in children who have suffered a serious lack of nutrition. Undernourished children have more problems fighting infections. Therefore, they may be sick more often, miss more school and fail to keep up academically.

A well-balanced diet that includes all essential vitamins, minerals and protein foods is instrumental in a child's proper brain development. Children should consume a variety of foods from the five major food groups that make up the Food Pyramid. Each food group supplies essential nutrients, including vitamins and minerals.

During the preschool years, children can eat the same foods as adults. An emphasis should be placed on the nutritional value of the foods. Include a variety of fresh vegetables and fruits, nonfat or low-fat dairy products (milk, yogurt, cheese), lean meats (chicken, turkey, fish, lean hamburger) and whole-grain cereals and bread.

Each child's needs may differ from the average, and appetites can vary from day to day. The best option to find out what and how much a child should eat to meet his or her needs is to get a customized MyPyramid Plan at www.mypyramid.gov/preschoolers/index.html. It will also provide ideas to help plan meals for preschool aged children.

These five food groups and the recommended daily servings are:

- Vegetables: 8 to 12 ounces (fresh, frozen, canned and dried vegetables).
- Fruits: 8 to 12 ounces (fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruit).
- Grains: 3 to 5 ounces (bread, cereal or pasta).
- Protein foods: 2 to 4 ounces (lean meats, beans or eggs).
- Dairy products: 16 ounces (milk and products made from milk).

According to the NIH, nutrients that are most likely to be deficient in a child's diet are calcium, iron, vitamin C, vitamin A, folic acid and vitamin B6. In children who don't eat enough from the meat group on a consistent basis, it's often found that they don't get enough iron and zinc. Also, if a child consistently misses out on servings of fruits, vegetables and whole grains; they aren't likely to get enough fiber.

To avoid these common deficiencies, the Food and Nutrition Board at the Institute of Medicine provides the following daily recommendations:

- Calcium: 500 to 800 milligrams. Calcium is a mineral that makes bones strong and a deficiency can interfere with bone growth and development. Calcium is also needed for muscles to move and for nerves to carry messages between the brain and the other parts of the body. A deficiency of calcium can lead to A diet with foods that are high in calcium to meet daily requirements is necessary for the development of strong bones.
- Iron: 7 to 10 milligrams. Iron is a mineral that is important for is necessary for the development of strong muscles and for the transport of oxygen by the blood. An iron deficiency can lead to fatigue, poor performance of activities, and lowered immunity.
- Vitamin C: 15 to 25 milligrams. Vitamin C is necessary in the body to form collagen in bones, cartilage, muscle and blood vessels and aids in the absorption of iron. Severe deficiency of vitamin C causes scurvy, a disease that causes spongy gums, loosening of the teeth, joint pain, and bleeding into the skin and mucous membranes, as well as anemia.
- Vitamin A: 300 to 400 micrograms. Vitamin A is actually a group of compounds that play an important role in vision, bone growth, reproduction, and cell formation. It also promotes healthy surface linings of the respiratory, urinary, and intestinal tracts, as well as the eyes. Vitamin A deficiency is a preventable cause of blindness.
- Folate: 150 to 200 micrograms. Not only does folic acid helps tissue grow and cells work properly, it helps form red blood cells and produces DNA. A deficiency may cause poor growth, gray hair, sore tongue, weakness, headaches, heart palpitations, and diarrhea. Long term deficiency can also lead to anemia.
- Vitamin B6: 0.5 to 0.6 milligrams. Vitamin B6 helps the immune system produce antibodies. Antibodies are needed to fight many diseases. Vitamin B6 also helps maintain blood sugar levels and form red blood cells. Not getting enough Vitamin B6 can decrease your immune response and also lead to anemia.

Good nutrition from birth is critical in raising mentally and physically healthy children. For more information about nutritional needs or age appropriate diets visit http://www.mypyramid.gov/. Also visit http://www.tricare.mil/getfit for additional information about nutrition and obesity.

Water Conservation Tip

Don't defrost frozen foods with running water. Plan ahead by placing frozen items in the refrigerator overnight or defrost them in the microwave. Saves 50 to 150 gallons a month.