

# Seasonal Flu

## What you need to know



The CDC recommends a yearly seasonal flu vaccine as an important step in protecting yourself from influenza. The 2010 -2011 flu vaccine will protect against influenza A virus, influenza B virus and the 2009 H1N1 virus. The vaccine is available as a “flu shot” or as a nasal spray. Flu can cause severe complications including pneumonia, bronchitis, and sinus and ear infections. The flu can also make chronic health problems worse. Each year, on average, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized and 36,000 people die from seasonal flu complications in the United States. The best time to get your vaccine is October or November, but getting vaccinated later in the year can still be beneficial. Flu is a serious contagious disease.

### The CDC recommends the following individuals receive seasonal flu immunizations yearly:

- Children 6 months to 19 years
- Pregnant women
- Adults 50 years and up
- Individuals with chronic medical conditions
- Residents of long term care centers or assisted living centers
- People who live with individuals of high risk category
- Health care workers
- Caregivers of children less than 5 years of age

### It is not recommended for anyone who:

- Is allergic to chicken eggs
- Has had severe reaction to influenza vaccine in past
- Has a history of Guillain-Barre' Syndrome
- Is a child less than 6 months
- Has a moderate to severe illness with fever  
(you should wait until symptoms are gone)

**Flu Shot Side Effects:** Are mild and can include soreness, swelling or redness of arm, and fever. Side effects are usually gone in 1-2 days.

**Nasal Vaccine Side Effects:** Are runny nose, wheezing, headache, vomiting, sore throat, cough, aches, and fever. Side effects are usually gone in 1-2 days.

You can receive your influenza vaccination at flu clinics held throughout the County or from your primary care provider. If unable to leave home due to a medical condition, contact a home health care agency such as Carroll Home Care (410-871-8000) and arrange for a home visit.

**The Elder Health Leadership Team welcomes the opportunity to include this seasonal flu page in the Healthy Carroll Families distribution. Please visit [www.HealthyCarroll.org](http://www.HealthyCarroll.org) for more information.**

# Stay Well during Flu Season

## 5 Smart Habits

- 1. Keep your hands clean.** One of the best ways to stay healthy is to wash your hands properly and frequently. Washing your hands well will help protect you from all germs, including seasonal flu and the H1N1 virus. Wash hands for 15 to 20 seconds using soap and warm water. When soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand wipes or gel sanitizers.
- 2. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables.** Produce is packed with the nutrients that your immune system needs to fight viruses and bacteria of all types. Go for all types of brightly color fruits and veggies. They will have more of the disease-fighting antioxidants, like vitamin C and beta-carotene. Varieties of produce that are available and can offer health benefits include fresh, frozen, dried, canned (in juice), and 100% juice can all offer health benefits.
- 3. Drink plenty of fluids.** Water is always a refreshing choice. Tea, especially antioxidant-rich green tea, can be a nice way to warm up and stay hydrated anytime. 100% orange or other juice is also good, but don't overdo it: A small glass a day is plenty. Drinking enough fluids (6 to 8 cups a day) will help keep your mucous membranes moist and able to fight off germs.
- 4. Choose nutrient-rich snacks.** During flu season, your body needs every drop of nutrition it can get, so don't waste your calories on 'empty' snacks. Skip the chips, cookies, and colas. Feed your body well with a variety of tasty nutrient-rich items. In addition to fruits and veggies, go for sunflower seeds, nuts (almonds, walnuts, cashews, etc.), low-fat yogurt, and beef jerky.
- 5. Consider a multi-vitamin/mineral supplement.** This is the right time of year for a little extra nutrition insurance, a basic vitamin/mineral pill with 100% of the Daily Value (DV) for most nutrients. Although super-expensive supplements with mega-doses are mostly a waste of your money, you may want to look for a supplement with 1000 IUs of vitamin D. While the DV is still 400 IUs, many experts are recommending an increase for optimal health and well-being.



For more information about the seasonal flu and H1N1 virus visit us at [www.HealthyCarroll.org](http://www.HealthyCarroll.org)

Adapted with permission from *Eat Right Montana*



# Five Successful Ways to Reduce Screen Time

Kids who spend less time in front of a screen, (TV, video games, or computers), do better in school, read more, sleep better, tend to eat healthier foods and weigh less. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under age 2 have no screen time, and that those older than 2 watch no more than 1 to 2 hours a day of quality programming. Here are some ideas on limiting screen time:

## Make the commitment

Spend time talking with your family about the benefits of reducing the amount of screen time for everyone. Focus on the fact that these changes will give you more time to spend doing fun and creative things together. Some families find it helpful to sign a 'pledge' together. "Turnoff Week" sponsored by The Center for SCREEN-TIME Awareness, is scheduled for September 19 – 25, 2010 and would be a great time to start.

## Have a plan and stick to it.

Figure out how much screen time you spend now and decide how to gradually reduce it. Some families choose specific times (like 4 to 6 PM) as screen-free. Other ideas: put the TV in a place where it isn't the center of attention; take TV's out of bedrooms; turn it off during mealtime and do not have it on as background noise; try not to use screen time as a babysitter.

## Be patient.

Reducing the amount of time that your family spends plugged into screens is a major change. Make this change in small steps rather than in giant leaps. Many children will hardly notice if you gradually decrease their TV or video game time in 15-minute increments.

## Be creative.

Here are some ways to spend screen free hours:

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|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Walk the dog        | Play a musical instrument          |
| Cook                | Play a game                        |
| Dance               | Draw                               |
| Ride a bike         | Build a fort with pillows or boxes |
| Read                | Throw a ball                       |
| Have a conversation | Sing                               |
| Toss a balloon      | Put on a show                      |
| Play Frisbee        |                                    |

## Treasure your time together.

The really good news about screen-free time is that it gives families more opportunities to really be together. You'll get more time to enjoy each other's company while developing habits that will promote good health.

# Smart SNACKING

Healthy snacks are a great way for people of all ages to meet their daily nutritional needs. According to the American Dietetic Association, the “Top 3 Snack Mistakes Parents Make”:

- 1) Thinking that snacking is a bad habit
- 2) Letting kids eat whatever they want
- 3) Not planning snacks

Snacks can play an important role in managing hunger and providing energy between meals. They can boost your child’s mental and physical skills, which will help them stay focused on homework and other after school commitments like sports practices. A well-timed snack, at least two hours before a meal, can even reduce overeating at mealtime.

With their children’s input parents can come up with a list of healthy snack options, and make sure the foods are on hand. If favorites are higher in sugar and fat, for example, chips, cookies and candy, set guidelines on how often these foods are allowed, or buy in smaller quantities or portions. Keep in mind that forbidden foods are often more appealing. Try healthier alternatives like graham crackers or baked chips.

Plan to keep snack foods easily available, especially if children are choosing their own snack. Try packing a snack box or having a snack shelf with foods that don’t need to be refrigerated such as dried fruits, whole grain cereal and crackers, pretzels, microwave popcorn, peanut butter, shelf stable pudding cups, etc. Refrigerated options are low fat yogurt, string cheese, fresh fruit and cut up vegetables and low fat dip.

If your child or teen stays after school for an activity, snacks brought from home will usually be healthier than what is available in a vending machine. Pack snacks like peanut butter and whole grain crackers, dry cereal, homemade snack and trail mixes, granola or cereal bars, pretzels, nuts, dried fruit, fresh fruit, individual fruit cups and an extra water bottle.

There is a place for snacks in a healthy eating plan. You can encourage healthy snacking by having a structured snack schedule and making nutritious foods available.

# Trail mix

Try the following recipes or use your imagination and make your own snack mixes - combine dry cereals, nuts, dried fruit and once in a while something sweet like mini chocolate chips or yogurt covered raisins. Kids can help decide what to use.

## Popcorn trail mix (Makes 14-1 cup servings)

6 cups unbuttered popcorn  
2 cups chocolate cereal  
2 cups toasted oat cereal  
2 cups small pretzel twists  
2 cups shredded wheat squares  
Optional – 1 cup peanuts

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl or bag. To control portions, divide into servings and place in individual bags or air tight containers.

One cup serving: 95 calories, .8 g fat, .1 g sat fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 178 mg sodium, 20 g carbohydrate, 2 g fiber, 2.3 g protein.

Prepared by Jan Temple, CFCS, Nutrition Field Specialist, Iowa State University Extension [www.extension.iastate.edu/food](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/food)

## Pumpkin party mix (Makes 2 cups)

This is an autumn variation of the more traditional Holiday Party Mix.

1 ½ cups crispy corn and rice square cereal  
½ cup toasted oat cereal  
¼ cup small pretzels  
4 teaspoons tub margarine  
½ teaspoon pumpkin pie spice  
2 teaspoons honey  
2 tablespoons raisins

In a 1 ½ quart casserole combine cereals and pretzels.

In a 1 cup measure combine honey, spice, and margarine. Microwave, uncovered, on high until margarine is melted. Pour mixture over cereal; toss to mix.

Microwave mixture, uncovered, on full power for 2 ½ minutes. Stir in raisins. Mix gets crisp as it cools.

Each 1/2 cup serving: 125 calories, 4 g fat, .7 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 210 mg sodium, 21 g carbohydrate, 1 g protein, 1 g fiber.

Adapted from: Better Homes & Gardens After-School Cooking by Iowa State University Extension [www.extension.iastate.edu/food](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/food)