



## *FLU SEASON APPROACHING*

While it's not possible to predict what this flu season will be like, we do know it will spread every year and the timing, severity and length of the season varies from one year to another. Flu viruses are constantly changing which means that a flu vaccination is required each year to deal with that current year's type. The activity most commonly peaks between December and February but can begin as early as October and continue as late as May.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the yearly flu vaccine for everyone 6 months of age and older. This is the **first** and **most important** step in protecting yourself from the flu. This vaccination should be received before the end of October to ensure protection before the flu season begins. It takes at least 2 full weeks for complete immunity to develop to prevent the illness so it's important to get the injection in a timely fashion.

In addition to the flu shot, it's important to stay away from sick people, wash your hands frequently and, if you're sick, stay home from work or school. It's important to wash your hands properly: use a comfortable water temperature, plenty of lather and lots of friction. The length of time for this procedure is at least 15 seconds. Singing "Happy Birthday" or "Jesus Loves Me" or reciting "The Lord's Prayer" will assure the 15 second length of time. Then the water should run off the tips of your fingers and the hands should be thoroughly dried with a clean paper towel. Drying thoroughly will keep the skin intact and prevent infections in any cuts. Alcohol-based cleaners are also effective and can be used when appropriate washing facilities are not available. You also might consider replacing your friendly handshake, high-five or hug with a fist bump as one-half of the germs are transferred in this process.

There are 2 types of vaccines available. Trivalent (containing 3 viruses) vaccines are available in intramuscular, intradermal and nasal spray forms while quadrivalent vaccine contains 4 viruses. Consult your health care provider for the formula you should receive, especially if you or a family member having respiratory problems. If the spray isn't available, don't delay in getting the vaccination.

Multiple studies conducted over the years have shown that the body's immunity to flu viruses (acquired either through natural infection or vaccination) declines over time. This decline is influenced by several factors: the antigen in the vaccine; the age of the patient; and the patient's general health. Generally, the body produces antibodies and the patient is protected throughout the flu season but will decline over time. Older folks and those with weakened immune systems may not generate the same amount of antibodies and the antibody level may drop more quickly when compared to young, healthy people.

The **bottom line:** Get your flu shot soon, eat a healthy diet of fruits and vegetables; wash your hands for more than 15 seconds and greet people with a fist bump.

*Information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was used in the preparation of this document.*

*Submitted by Jo Flanders*

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## *Part D*

### *Review Before You Renew*

If you are currently insured through a Medicare Part D Prescription Drug Plan you probably have already received your annual renewal notice in the mail. Please read it carefully. It is possible that your costs are scheduled to rise in 2015. At the same time, your benefits may decrease and your 'donut hole' might just get a bit deeper. It's a good idea to ***Review Before You Renew***.

When you're ready to renew your Part D coverage, or - if yours is a new enrollment in 2015, the place to check for your 'Best Plan' is at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov), the Internet site where all your Part D questions can be answered and where enrollment and/or plan change can be easily accomplished.

If you depend on others for your online review, have them give you a printout of your coverage options. It's a big decision and a major expense. You should have time to think over your available choices before you decide.

The general Part D enrollment period for 2015 is from October 15 to December 7. Alternative enrollment in a Medicare Advantage plan is also available during this period.

Special enrollment provisions exist for newly eligible, disabled and special need individuals.

*Submitted by Jim Barthell*

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### *.....when less is more.....*

Items found so far in our shrubs: 4 baseballs, a floodlight, a damaged reserved parking sign, part of a squirrel, discarded bricks, guttering, fencing materials, can upon can of fast food containers, and a '73 Datsun pick-up (just kidding about the Datsun). Our reality is that our landscape and building have become extremely high-maintenance. We don't have the abundance of volunteer manpower or money we need. Studies show that if a church property looks overgrown or in need of repair, visitors assume the congregation is in the same condition.

Numerous members of the congregation have been generously contributing their time, energy, resources, and on occasion some blood to restore our property. It is to our advantage for our tired and overgrown landscape to be replaced with attractive low maintenance plants wherever possible. The same is true with the interior. We are working to rebuild our church as Christ's partner in this community.

Much has been accomplished. Much remains to be done. Thanks to everyone who has worked so energetically, outside and inside, to help restore our facility and to empower us for our future role in this community.

Blessing,

Bruce Vineyard

ABLE VOLUNTEERS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME  
TO HELP WITH LAWN WORK. SO IF YOU'RE  
WILLING AND ABLE PLEASE JUST DROP BY  
THE CHURCH ANYTIME YOU'RE AVAILABLE.



