2011 Influenza Season
Preparing for Patients, Family, and Community
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Do you remember the last time you or a loved one got sick with the flu? What steps are you taking to stay healthy during the flu season? Will you be prepared?

It may have been so long ago that you can’t recall the last time you had the flu. Or, you could have had mild symptoms and dismissed them as just a cold. Now, if the illness was caused by a cold, you probably recovered in 5 to 7 days. But, if your symptoms occurred between November and February, chances are, you had a mild case of the flu. In spite of its mild effect, your flu virus was spreading to patients and family.

For others, the flu makes them very sick: “Suddenly, I felt like I’d been hit by a truck.” Flu virus symptoms are chills, fever, sore throat, severe headache, and muscle aches usually taking 2 weeks to recover. Most people recover easily from the flu. However, the flu (unlike a cold), can lead to serious complications including pneumonia and even death especially in infants and the elderly.

What are the best steps to take to stay healthy? First and foremost, get vaccinated against the flu as soon as possible. This is strongly recommended for employees in medical offices. The CDC says, “Because health care professionals provide care to patients at high risk for complications, achieving high rates of vaccination among them will reduce disease and healthcare costs.” Click on this link to find out when you can get vaccinated http://kpnet.kp.org:81/ga/sites/Flu/index.html

Secondly, wash your hands often. Hand washing is the number one way to prevent the spread of infection. Be sure to wash your hands long for at least 20 seconds. How long is that? About as long as it takes to sing the “Happy Birthday” song two times through.

No one can predict how the flu season will turn out. There have been seasons when the vaccine was late, or in limited supply, or the strains in the vaccine didn’t match the strains that eventually circulated, or even a new strain suddenly appeared (H1N1) in 2009.

With good planning this year, the vaccine has already arrived. KPGA members are preparing and protecting themselves by getting vaccinated. The best way to prepare is to get your flu vaccine. Will you be prepared?
Early Detection is the Key....

Fonda Mitchell MD, MBA, FACOG Chief of Women’s Services

Breast Cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among women in the United States. Despite this fact, the death rate from Breast Cancer has steadily declined since 1990.

The decline in mortality is due to a combination of early detection, advances in diagnostic techniques and advances in treatment methods.

Early detection begins with breast exams. Taking a few minutes to do a breast self-exam once a month can make a lifetime of difference. Nearly 70% of all Breast Cancers are found through self exams and with early detection the 5 year survival rate can be as high as 98%.

Clinical breast exams by your Provider should be scheduled every 3 years if you are a woman aged 20-39 and annually if you are a woman age 40 and over.

Mammography is your best defense against Breast Cancer because it can detect the disease in its early stages, before it can be felt during a breast examination. A mammogram can help the Healthcare Team decide if a lump, growth or change in the breast needs further testing.

While no one knows the exact causes of Breast Cancer, studies have shown that women with certain risk factors are more likely to develop the disease than others.

Risk Factors for Breast Cancer include:

- Age 65 or older
- Being obese or overweight
- Lack of physical activity
- Diet high in saturated fat/ excessive alcohol intake
- Early menstruation/ Late Menopause
- Family history of Breast Cancer-particularly a mother or sister

You can take control of your health with early detection awareness. By taking proactive steps and encouraging others to do the same...We can save lives!