

**FINAL (7-11-07)**

### **Questions & Sample Answers / ECHO-TV Show # 311-312 “Preventing Seasonal Flu”**

**(Recording Show: MONDAY, JULY 23rd, 2007 / 3:00-8:00 pm @ TPT)**

#### **1. This show is about influenza or the flu. What is “the flu,” and how dangerous is it?**

Sample Answer:

- Flu is a disease that many people get during the winter months. It affects those parts of the body that we use for breathing (lungs). You may hear people talk about getting “stomach flu,” but flu doesn’t usually affect that part of the body.
- When you get the flu, you usually become sick very suddenly. You may have a sore throat, coughing, fever, headache or muscle aches. You may feel very tired.
- Because flu comes around every year, people sometimes don’t take it very seriously. But the flu – and other health problems caused by the flu – are among the leading causes of death in Minnesota and nationwide.

#### **2. When does the flu season get started in Minnesota and how long does it last?**

Sample Answer

- It’s hard to predict when flu season will begin and end in any given year. It can start as early as October.
- The number of people with flu tends to peak in January or February, or even as late as March.

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- Flu season usually ends when the weather starts to get warmer. Some years, it may not be over until late spring.

### **3. Is the flu more dangerous for some people than for others and if so, why is the flu more dangerous for some people?**

Sample Answer:

- Yes. In some people flu can lead to other health problems. That includes children under five, adults over 50, and people who already have serious health problems like cancer, heart disease or diabetes.
- Children, older people and people with health problems may not be able to fight the flu as well as other people because of weakened immune systems.
- Older adults are more likely to die from health problems caused by the flu.
- Young children are more likely to be very sick, and end up in the hospital.

### **4. What are some ways to prevent getting the flu this winter?**

Sample Answer:

- There are several things you can do to keep from getting the flu – or giving it to somebody else if you already have it.
  - Stay home from work or school if you’re sick

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- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue – or your sleeve – if you cough or sneeze
  - Wash your hands often... and be sure to do a good job...
  - And get a flu shot every year
- 
- To help be sure you wash your hands properly use soap and water and wash vigorously for 20 seconds or more. This will help remove germs that we can't see but are easily spread when we shake hands, open doors or touch surfaces.
  - To help you know how long 20 seconds is, scrub with soap and water for as long as it takes you to sing “happy birthday!”
  - Avoid drinking out of the same glass or sharing silverware when sharing noodles or rice with family and friends. That's how germs can spread.

#### 5. How helpful are flu shots?

Sample Answer:

- Flu shots are the most important thing you can do to protect yourself. They can usually keep you from getting the flu – and even if you do get the flu, you won't be as sick.
- You need to get a flu shot every fall (October or November) because the flu changes from year to year and flu shots are made in an effort to “match” the type of flu likely to occur each season.
- Our communities (insert cultural community here) don't always know or understand the importance of getting a flu shot especially our elders, young children or the elderly so we need to encourage others to get a flu shot.

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- Flu is spread easily in settings where there are many people like schools or nursing homes. Flu shots can help us stay healthy even if we are exposed to the virus in crowded settings.

#### **6. When and where can I get a flu shot if I want one?**

Sample Answer:

- You can get a flu shot from your doctor or neighborhood clinic.
- In October and November, there are typically special clinics in grocery stores, malls or public health departments where you can get flu shots.
- The cost for flu shots varies but some clinics offer free or low cost flu shots to families. Some insurance plans also cover the cost of flu shots.
- You can get more information about influenza (the flu) as well as find out where and when to get a flu shot from your local or state public health department.
- [HOST MENTION: ECHO will be linking to a variety of resources with translated flu information at [www.echominnesota.org](http://www.echominnesota.org)]

#### **7. Over the last couple of years, we’ve been hearing a lot about “bird flu.” What is “bird flu” – and how is it different from regular flu?**

Sample Answer:

- Like humans, birds and other animals can also get the flu. Right now, there’s a kind of bird flu in some parts of the world that can also make people sick. That doesn’t happen very often, but when it does, the people who get it are very, very sick. It’s very dangerous.

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- People are worried that this kind of flu could change, so that people can get it more easily. If that happens, it could spread very quickly around the world, making millions of people sick.
- We don't know when that will happen – or if it will happen at all with this particular kind of bird flu. But we need to be ready in case it does.

#### **8. Is there anything I can do to protect myself and my family if bird flu arrives in Minnesota?**

Sample Answer:

- If bird flu turns into a new and dangerous kind of human flu, it could have a big impact on everyone.
- This kind of flu would be different from regular flu, but you can do some of the same things to protect yourself. Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze. Wash your hands. Keep yourself strong by being physically active and eating the right kinds of food.
- A regular flu shot won't protect you from this new kind of flu, but it's still a good idea to get one – so you don't have to worry about getting the regular flu.
- But if bird flu turns into human flu, we may also need to change the way we live our lives – at least for awhile. [MORE #8 ON NEXT PAGE]

#### **#8 Continued ..... (Is there anything I can do to protect myself and my family if bird flu arrives in Minnesota?)**

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Sample Answer:

- People might be asked to stay home from work or school, or avoid getting together in large groups. You might not be able to get food, water or health care from the usual places. You might be asked to stay home, at least for a short while, and avoid contact with other people.
- If bird flu turns into human flu, life may be difficult for awhile, so we need to be ready for it. But together, we’ll be able to get through it.

#### **9. Is there anything else our expert guest might like to add?**

Sample Answer:

(Optional question only if time permits)

- Add any culturally relevant info here for each of our ECHO groups.
- Guests may wish to promote their agency or community work around this particular subject.
- Some cultures would like to mention “alternative medicines” (herbal remedies) that may also support the recovery of flu symptoms.