



Better Breathing

A publication of
Breathe California
of the Bay Area

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Taking Precautions against Swine Flu

Source: Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago

Flu season usually runs through the winter months. However, there is a new kind of flu virus that has taken over our spring season. The swine flu has caused major concerns in people everywhere. This virus is contagious and has flu-like symptoms, but has no vaccine. As the number of swine flu cases rise, please practice preventive hygiene habits at home and around others.

What is Swine Flu?

Swine flu is a respiratory virus which commonly occurs in pigs. However, in late April of this year, the CDC found that the swine flu had become contagious and could be transmitted by humans. The virus has the potential of becoming a pandemic. All people, both young and old, are at risk of developing swine flu. Those who suffer from chronic respiratory illnesses like asthma and

COPD should take preventative measures and act quickly when they develop swine flu symptoms.

Recognizing the Symptoms

Signs of swine flu are the same as seasonal flu. You find yourself with a fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headaches, chills and fatigue. Some have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. Just like other flu viruses, swine flu spreads when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or by touching their mouth, eyes, or nose after contact with a contaminated object.

Prevention

There is currently no vaccine for this virus, so the best protection is to practice good hygiene.

- Cover your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing.

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Attention San Jose BBC Members: Date Change for May Meeting

With the Memorial Day Holiday just around the corner, we know many of you will have plans to join friends and family for an afternoon picnic or barbeque. So, the San Jose Better Breathers Club will be meeting one week early on May 18th.

Join us to hear Cathy Lynch present on *Preventing Falls and Injury*. The meeting will be held at the regular time and location. We hope to see you there!



Commit to Quit!

May 31st is World No Tobacco Day.

Celebrate World No Tobacco Day by giving up tobacco.

Need help to quit?
Join Breathe California's Ashkickers Smoking Cessation Classes.

This six-session program helps smokers travel through the various stages of quitting, which include thinking of quitting, preparing to quit, finally quitting, and preventing relapse.

Take the first step by contacting Dennis Acha for more information and to register for the next class.

Call (408) 998-5865 or email dennis@lungsrus.org

Taking Precautions...

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- The best way is to cough into the bend of your arm, away from other people.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth before washing your hands.
- Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers and place them in gathering areas. Use the sanitizers after contact with other people. Rub the sanitizer in your hands until the gel has dried completely.
- Place containers of disinfecting wipes near telephones shared by more than one person and be sure to wipe down the receiver before using the telephone.

If you have flu symptoms, please stay home and contact your healthcare provider. When a household member shows flu symptoms, non-infected family members may consider using N95 disposable respirator masks (available commercially) in the home.

Treatments

There are two anti-viral drugs that have shown some effectiveness in treating swine flu, Tamiflu and Relenza. People who have symptoms of swine flu are encouraged to discuss with their healthcare providers whether antiviral medications are recommended for their treatment.

For more information, call the new swine flu hotline at 1-888-865-0564.

Remember Those You Love: Make a Donation

May 25th is Memorial Day. This month, honor your loved ones by making a memorial donation to Breathe California. Use the memorial envelope enclosed in this newsletter or call Steve French at (408) 998-5865.



In the News

Each month, we are proud to bring you some of the latest news affecting lung disease patients. You can also find more news briefs and articles online by visiting:

www.lungsrus.org

Click on the News link from the menu bar to reach our newsroom. From there, you can view individual articles by clicking on the "News Briefs" link.

From the Newsroom, you can also read about the agency's latest work in the community. Click on the "Agency News" link to view our latest articles and press releases.

The following news briefs have been summarized from external sources and have been placed here solely to inform you of the latest in lung health news. Breathe California does not endorse their findings nor have they verified their accuracy.

New Study Says Acid Reflux Meds Don't Help Asthma

Source: Associated Press, April 15, 2009

According to a new study published in the New England Journal of Medicine, heartburn drugs are not effective in reducing asthma symptoms, as had been previously thought.

Due to an apparent link between asthma and acid reflux, a number of medical guidelines have encouraged the use of heartburn drugs to help patients control asthma -regardless of whether they suffer from acid reflux. To further investigate this connection, researchers from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute conducted a study to see if a common heartburn drug, Nexium, helped patients with poorly-controlled asthma reduce symptoms. After studying 412 patients at 19 centers across the study, researchers concluded that patients

receiving the drug fared no better than the control group who received dummy pills.

Study leader Dr. Robert Wise, a lung specialist at Johns Hopkins University, said it gives the first solid evidence that "silent" acid reflux doesn't have a role in poor asthma control. The researchers also urged asthma patients who don't experience heartburn to ask their doctor whether they should stop taking acid reflux drugs.

While the study sheds new light into the effectiveness of acid reflux drugs in controlling asthma, researchers noted that this does not mean that there isn't a relationship between asthma and gastroesophageal reflux.

EPA Declares Greenhouse Gases a Health Hazard

Source: CNN, April 17, 2009

In a landmark announcement, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has declared that greenhouse gases pose a health hazard. The gases - which include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulfur hexafluoride - have been at the center of a debate on global warming and open up the way to new proposed regulations.

"The science clearly shows that concentrations of these gases are at unprecedented levels as a result of human emissions, and these high levels are very likely the cause of the increase in average temperatures and other changes in our climate," said EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson.

The finding was made in a report titled "Assessment of the Impacts of Global Change on Regional U.S. Air Quality: A

Synthesis of Climate Change Impacts on Ground-Level Ozone". Specifically, the report noted that global warming could make ozone pollution worse in many parts of the country, potentially causing air quality alerts earlier in the spring and later in the fall, the report says. In addition to health problems, the report says global warming could lead to increased drought, more heavy downpours and flooding, and more frequent and intense heat waves and wildfires.

The report comes as Congressional leaders debate new efforts to combat the effects of global warming. The House Energy and Commerce Committee is scheduled to begin hearings next week on a comprehensive energy and climate bill, called the American Clean Energy and Security Act.

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is a publication of:

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*As the local clean air
and lung health leader,
Breathe California of the
Bay Area fights lung
disease in all its forms
and works with its
communities to promote
lung health.*

Upcoming Better Breathers Club Meetings

Tuesday, May 12, 11:00 am to 12:30 pm – South County

De Paul Health Center Conference Room, 18550 De Paul Drive, Morgan Hill

Speaker: Cathy Lynch

“Preventing Falls and Injury”

Monday, May 11th, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm – Palo Alto

Avenidas Senior Center, 450 Bryant Street

Speaker: Cathy Lynch

“Preventing Falls and Injury”

****Monday, May 18th, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm – San Jose****

Breathe California Offices, 1469 Park Avenue

Speaker: Cathy Lynch

“Preventing Falls and Injury”

A Look Ahead: Our May BBC Meetings

Palo Alto – Monday, June 8th, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

San Jose – Monday, June 29th, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

****The San Jose meeting is scheduled a week earlier in honor of Memorial Day.****

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