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Senior Safety News

The Flu

Well it's May and it looks like we need to avoid the Flu already. Unfortunately, there won't be any vaccine for at least four months.

In the meantime, this issue has an article on hints to keep the flu from your door. This article is provided by PRxN a mail service prescription program that is endorsed by Tribal Nations, the IAMAW and a host of other unions and association.

Keeping Safe at Home

Seniors are targets for predators in their communities. We have an article with tips on keeping your home safe from burglars.

Identity Theft

This is a problem for everybody today. We want to provide seniors with resources to avoid identity theft, as well as, what to do if your identity has been stolen.

Posters

We have increased the number of posters on the website. Go to www.seniorsafetyonline.com Posters are in the Home and Housing sections.

What is Swine Flu?

"Swine Flu", formally referred to as H1N1, is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This new virus was first detected in people in April 2009 in the US. Other countries, especially Mexico, have also reported people sick with this new virus. This virus spreads from person-to-person, probably in much the same way that regular seasonal influenza viruses spread.

Why is this new H1N1 virus called "Swine Flu"?

This virus is commonly referred to as "Swine Flu" because laboratory tests show that this virus is genetically similar to influenza viruses that normally occur in pigs in North America. However, further study has shown that this new virus is very different from what normally circulates in North American pigs. This virus contains a mix of genes from flu viruses in pigs from Europe and Asia, bird and humans.

Do pigs carry the virus and can I catch this virus from a pig or eating pork?

At this time, there is no evidence that swine (pigs) in the US are infected with this new virus. However, there are flu viruses that commonly cause outbreaks of illness in pigs. Most of the time, these viruses do not infect people, but influenza viruses can spread back and forth between pigs and people. You cannot get this new H1N1 virus from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

Are there human infections with this H1N1 virus in the U.S.?

Yes. Cases of human infection with this H1N1 influenza virus were first confirmed in Southern California and near Guadalupe County, Texas. The outbreak has intensified rapidly and more states have been reporting cases of illness from this virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local and state health agencies are working together to investigate this situation. Is this new H1N1 virus contagious?

CDC has determined that this new H1N1 virus is contagious and is able to spread from human to human. However, at this time, it is not known how easily the virus spreads between people. The virus can be spread mainly coughing or sneezing by people with the infection. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

What are the signs and symptoms of this virus in people?

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Preparation is the best defense against burglaries. Take these steps to protect yourself and your valuables.

Lock your doors, whether you are home or away. Not all burglars work at night and a professional burglar can be in and out of a home in under 10 minutes--as long as it takes you to run an errand.

Trim back trees, bushes and shrubs in which burglars might hide.

Engrave your driver's license number on TVs, stereos, cameras, etc. with an engraving tool often available through the local police department. The engraved number will act as a deterrent and, if your property is stolen, help you identify it if it is recovered.

Consider getting a dog that loves to bark at strangers. A noisy dog doesn't have to be big to be an effective deterrent to crime.

To discourage a burglar from lifting a sliding door out of its track, put a dowel or an old broomstick in the door track. You can also use a dowel or broomstick, cut to the right length, to brace a sliding door shut.

When adding locks to doors, be sure a burglar can't reach it by putting his arm through a broken window. It's best to use a deadbolt lock with a one-inch throw, a 5- or 6-pin tumbler cylinder and a cylinder guard ring.

Make sure all doors, especially back and side doors, are kick-proof. They should be constructed of solid wood or metal.

Don't leave a spare key outside. Burglars know to look for a key under the doormat, in a planter or on top of the door frame. If you must hide a front door key, conceal it in the backyard in an unlikely spot. Better yet, ask a neighbor to keep a spare key for you.

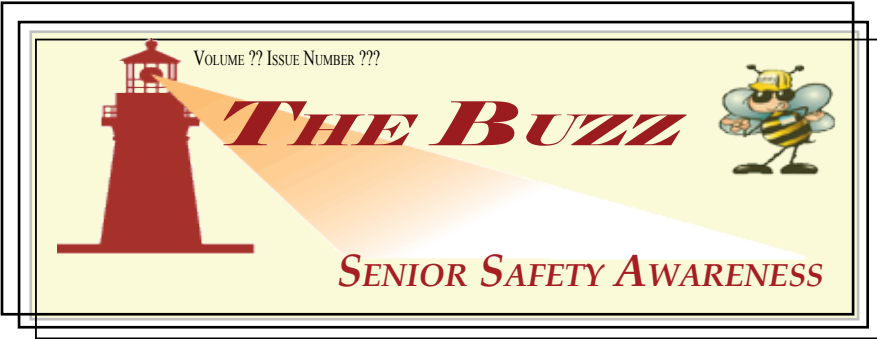
Take extra precautions if you are away all day. Most burglaries occur during the day when occupants are not home. Try to make it sound as if someone is home. Turn on the TV, a stereo or a radio talk show before you leave.

Turn on a few lights when you go out at night. A good approach is to install an automatic timer that turns lights, radios and TVs on and off in a lifelike pattern. Most people use timers for vacations, but it is just as important to set them during your regular nights out.

Don't hide valuables in one location. Disperse them throughout the house.

Better still, get a safe deposit box to store valuables.

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Vacations take planning, especially when it comes to discouraging a burglar. The best way to deal with home security in your absence is to make it appear that you're at home. Stop all deliveries and newspapers, ask the post office to hold your mail and have a neighbor pick up whatever winds up in your mailbox or on your doorstep.

Ask a neighbor to stop in and rearrange the drapes and window shades and reschedule the automatic timer. Have the grass cut or snow removed. Snow piled up at your front door or an unkempt lawn is an open invitation to a burglar.

If you happen to wake up or come home to find a burglar in your home, don't confront him and don't panic.

.....courtesy of New Mexico Aging and Long Term Services Department

Senior Safety: Identity Theft

Identity theft can be as simple as someone stealing your credit cards and using them to make purchases. But more sophisticated thieves can gather a few important numbers from you--your Social Security Number, your bank account or a credit card number—and assume your identity and make purchases in your name.



Individuals who are victimized by these thieves can face years of problems with their credit. They may not realize someone has damaged their credit rating until they apply for a home mortgage or another form of loan.

Thieves can peer over a customer's shoulder at an ATM or in a phone booth to get personal identification numbers or they can even go through trash containers to find discarded credit card applications and checkbooks.

To protect yourself:

- (1) Don't carry around extra credit cards and identification, especially your Social Security card. Thieves with that nine-digit number will have access to your medical, financial, credit and educational records;
- (2) Don't give out personal information over the phone unless it is someone you know or an established firm.
- (3) Shred pre-approved credit applications, credit card receipts, bills and other financial information you don't want before you throw them away; and order your credit report once a year to check for accuracy or fraudulent use.

If You Are A Victim of Identity Theft

You must act quickly to minimize the damage. When you discover you are the victim of identity theft, immediately make contact with the following organizations:

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(1) Credit bureaus: Call the fraud units of these credit reporting companies ñ Equifax (1-800-525-6285) and TransUnion (1-800-916-8800). Report the theft of your credit cards or numbers and ask that your account be flagged. This will help stop new fraudulent accounts from being opened by the impostor.
Ask the credit bureaus for names and phone numbers of credit companies that have granted fraudulent accounts in your name.

(2) Financial institutions: Contact your bank or credit union if your checks or ATM card have been stolen, or if a bank account has been set up fraudulently in your name. Cancel your checking and savings accounts and get a new account number and a new ATM card. Do not use your old password for your new ATM card personal identification number or common numbers like your birthdate or the last four digits of your Social Security Number.

(3) Creditors: Call and write to all creditors with whom your name has been used fraudulently. Get replacement cards with new account numbers and ask that the old accounts be closed.
Banks and creditors may ask you to fill out notarized fraud affidavits. This can become costly, and a written statement and supporting documentation should be enough.

(4) Also, report any theft or fraud to your local law enforcement agency. Keep the phone number of your fraud investigator handy and give it to creditors and others who require verification of your case. Most financial institutions and credit card companies have policies that will, in most cases, clear debts incurred in your name as a result of fraud. But the organizations may have deadlines by which you must file reports, so do not delay in letting them know if a transaction has taken place that you did not make.



For more help with identity theft, visit: [Identity Theft Prevention and Survival](#)

..... *The Flu -continued from page 1*

The symptoms of this new influenza A H1N1 virus in people are similar to the symptoms of regular human flu. These symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. A significant number of people who have been infected with this virus also have reported diarrhea and vomiting. Also, like seasonal flu, severe illnesses and death has occurred as a result of illness associated with this virus. What should I do to keep from getting the flu?

First and most important: wash your hands. Try to stay in good general health. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food. Try not to touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus. Avoid close contact with people who are sick.

For more information, please go to the CDC website dedicated to Swine Flu information: http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/swineflu_you.htm or contact your healthcare provider.

At PRxN®, we are dedicated to maintaining your good health!