What’s on the Horizon for Public Health?

Topics Times Two: Vaccinations and COVID 19 Symptoms

While the world is rightfully focused on addressing COVID-19, it's important to remember that vaccine-preventable diseases like measles kill over 100,000 people a year worldwide. Vaccines are one of the most important public health achievements in human history, and now, more than ever, we must protect the progress we've made.

People of all ages with upcoming vaccinations should call their healthcare provider to discuss whether their appointments are still scheduled. You will be advised of precautions, if any, they may want you to take during the visit. It is especially important that infants and children under two are vaccinated on time and on schedule. Your provider can help you plan ahead to get your child vaccinated.

If you are unable to make an appointment at this time, please set a reminder to reschedule any cancelled vaccine appointments after the stay-at-home orders are lifted. This will help protect your family and your community from vaccine-preventable diseases.

COVID-19 is currently our biggest public health threat, but it's not the only serious disease circulating. A drop in vaccination rates could leave us vulnerable to measles, whooping cough, and other contagious and dangerous disease outbreaks when social distancing recommendations are lifted.

The Center for Disease control (CDC) has added several new symptoms to its list for the coronavirus: chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, repeated shaking with chills and a loss of taste or smell. These six new symptoms join the existing list with fever, cough and shortness of breath or difficulty breathing. The CDC website still indicates that symptoms appear within 2 to 14 days of exposure to the virus.

Importantly, the "emergency warning signs" for COVID-19 include trouble with breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest. People with these symptoms should seek medical attention immediately. "This list is not all inclusive," says the CDC, "please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you."

CDC also says that older adults and those with underlying medical conditions such as heart or lung disease seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19. These people should take additional precautions and monitor their symptoms. You can access the CDC symptoms page here. www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html

For ongoing health information, please bookmark our Horizon Public Health website at www.horizonpublichealth.org

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