



# S.A.L.T. TIMES

December 2008



## Fraud Alert: Scam Health Insurance and Medicare Card Offers

When the economy struggles, fraudulent health insurers work overtime. Bogus insurance companies collect premiums or simply gain access to your bank or credit card accounts and steal your money, with no actual insurance coverage provided.

The state Office of the Insurance Commissioner recently revamped the Fraud Section of its Web to better educate consumers about scams and make it easy to find contact information to report insurance fraud. The site includes a warning about health insurance scams. The information is particularly timely since several seniors in our state recently received calls from criminals claiming to work for the federal government.

KIRO TV aired a warning on Friday about these cons, who claim to be offering a

new medical discount card for Medicaid and Medicare patients. If you get a call like this from someone asking for your personal information, hang up. Medicaid and Medicare will never call you to inform you about a plan change and they won't ask for your personal information over the phone.

The Insurance Commissioner says to be wary of any unsolicited offers and watch out for companies that say they can provide superior benefits for a low cost and few qualifications. Check out insurance providers on the OIC site or call 1-800-562-6900 to verify that a company is legitimate before you provide any financial information or sign an agreement. You can also call that number to tell OIC about an insurance plan that seems too good to be true or e-mail their investigators at [consumerprotection@oic.wa.gov](mailto:consumerprotection@oic.wa.gov).



Sign up to receive your free S.A.L.T. Times newsletter via e-mail. This helps cut down printing and mailing costs, but there are other benefits, too!

Seniors who receive the newsletter through their e-mail will also receive S.A.L.T. meeting notices, scam alerts, relevant press releases and information about community events. Since the newsletter is only sent out once a month, this is a great way to get information in between newsletters.

It's simple! Just send your e-mail address to: [Kasey.Frazier@clark.wa.gov](mailto:Kasey.Frazier@clark.wa.gov)

# If You Have a Cold or Flu, Antibiotics Won't Work for You

Taking antibiotics for viral infections such as a cold, cough, the flu, or most bronchitis, will not cure the infection or help you feel better. Antibiotics kill bacteria, not viruses.

Clark County Public Health is urging people with colds and flu not to seek treatment with antibiotics. 'Taking antibiotics when you have a virus may do more harm than good,' said Clark County Health Officer Dr. Alan Melnick. 'Taking antibiotics when they are not needed increases your risk of getting an infection later that resists antibiotic treatment.'

Using antibiotics appropriately is important for your health, your family's health, and the health of those around you. Here are some ways to promote proper antibiotic use:

- Do not take an antibiotic for a viral infection like a cold, a cough, or the flu.
- When you are prescribed an antibiotic, take it exactly as the doctor tells you, without skipping doses. Complete the prescribed course even if you are feeling better. If treatment

stops too soon, some bacteria may survive and re-infect you. Don't save antibiotics for the next time you get sick.

- Make sure your children take all antibiotic medication as prescribed, even if they feel better.
- Do not demand antibiotics when a doctor says they are not needed. They will not help treat your infection.
- Do not take antibiotics prescribed for someone else. The antibiotic may not be appropriate for your illness. Taking the wrong medicine may delay correct treatment and allow bacteria to multiply.
- Talk with your physician or other health care provider about antibiotic resistance.

Improper use of antibiotics is leading to increasing antibiotic resistance, considered one of the world's pressing public health problems. Antibiotic resistance can cause significant danger and suffering for people who have common infections that once were easily treatable with antibiotics. When antibiotics

## CORRECTION

The November edition of S.A.L.T. Times inaccurately listed the American Red Cross as a resource for emergency assistance. They only provide *disaster relief* assistance.

If you need food, shelter, medical, or even holiday assistance, dial 2-1-1. 211 Info provides information and referrals for just about every community resource you can think of. You can also visit their web site at [www.211info.org](http://www.211info.org).

fail to work, the consequences are longer-lasting illnesses, more doctor visits or extended hospital stays, and the need for more expensive and toxic medications. Some resistant infections can cause death.

Sick individuals aren't the only people who can suffer the consequences. Families and entire communities feel the impact when disease-causing germs become resistant to antibiotics. These antibiotic-resistant bacteria can quickly spread to family members, schoolmates and co-workers, threatening the community with a new strain of infectious disease that is more difficult to cure and more expensive to treat.

To be placed on the mailing list or e-mail distribution list to receive the FREE S.A.L.T. Times monthly newsletter, call the Clark County Sheriff's Office Outreach Unit at (360)397-2211 ext. 3380 or e-mail [Kasey.Frazier@clark.wa.gov](mailto:Kasey.Frazier@clark.wa.gov).

# Holiday Safety Tips



The holiday season always presents unique dangers, but add a very stressed economy to the equation and now you have more to be concerned about. But taking a few prevention measures can help keep the holidays happy.

- Coordinate shopping trips with a friend or relative.
- If your grandchildren are out with you during this busy time of the year instruct them to stay close to you and do not allow them to go to the parking lot or restroom alone. Make sure children know where to go in case they get separated from you.
- Be extra careful if you carry a wallet or purse. They are the prime targets of criminals in crowded shopping areas, transportation terminals, public restrooms and store dressing rooms.
- If you must leave valuable items in your car while out and about, place items out of sight before reaching your destination. This includes packages, backpacks, gym bags, GPS units, etc. An opportunistic thief is on the lookout for “trunk-packing”, and can break into your car the minute you’re out of sight.
- Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason. Carry minimal cash and wear minimal jewelry.
- Be wary of strangers who come to your door during the holidays. Criminals sometimes pose as couriers delivering gifts and door-to-door sales are often fraudulent.
- Pick up your mail as soon as possible after it’s been delivered. If you are going to be gone, have someone pick up your mail for you. Use a U.S. Postal collection box or take your outgoing mail to the post office.
- Don’t advertise the great gifts you receive. Break boxes down that contained expensive items and turn packaging inside out before placing them on the curb.

## ’Twas the Night Before Christmas

*’Twas the night before Christmas  
the neighborhood slept,  
no robberies or burglaries,  
not one single theft.*

*We were being aware,  
it’s our job, and it’s tough,  
but when neighbors work together,  
crooks can’t do their stuff.*

*We see you have deadbolts,  
and your windows are pinned.  
You’ve joined “Neighborhood Watch,”  
and that’s how you win.*

*When your neighbor goes traveling,  
keep an eye on his house,  
keep bad guys from stirring,  
except that darn mouse.*

*Your car, locked while shopping,  
packages kept out of view,  
you double-checked your charge slips,  
and the bills on line too.*

*Well, got to run,  
we’re out of time,  
so Happy Holidays,  
and thanks for helping us...*

*Take A Bite Out Of Crime!*

*Original author Clement Moore  
Author unknown*

Clark County Sheriff's Office  
P.O. Box 410  
Vancouver, WA 98666

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
VANCOUVER, WA  
Permit No. 130

## Holiday Decoration Exchange and Potluck

**Please join us for one of our favorite  
S.A.L.T. traditions!**

Bring your favorite dish (and a serving utensil) for the potluck. Instead of an ornament exchange, we are having a holiday decoration exchange. If you would like to participate bring an inexpensive, wrapped decoration. Rules of the exchange will be announced at the event.

This is always a lot of fun so we hope to see you there. Bring a friend!



**December 15, 2008  
11:00 a.m.**

**Camas Police Dept.  
2100 NE 3rd Ave.  
Camas, WA**



**For other formats:** Clark County ADA Office, Voice (360) 397-2000 Relay (800) 833-6384, E-mail [ADA@clark.wa.gov](mailto:ADA@clark.wa.gov)