

## Surviving the Flu Season

Source: *Breathe California*

The fall brings about cooler weather, changing leaves and the holidays. People tend to spend more time indoors because of the cold weather, which makes it easier for germs and illness to spread. Unfortunately, the fall also brings on flu season.

Influenza, also known as the flu, is a viral infection that affects the nose, throat, bronchi and, occasionally, the lungs. When the virus reaches the lungs, the tissues in the respiratory tract become swollen and inflamed. People infected with the flu can infect others through sneezing, coughing or even talking. The disease can also be passed on by direct hand or mouth contact.

Most infected people will recover from the flu on their own within one or two weeks without medical treatment. However, for young children, the elderly, and people with serious medical conditions, influenza can lead to severe complications, like pneumonia.

Children may get more mild flu infections than adults, but the rates of flu are much higher among children.

### Symptoms

People infected with the flu may carry the infection for 2-3 days before developing any symptoms. Symptoms include an onset of runny nose, nasal congestion, sore throat from post nasal drip, cough and a high fever. Some may also experience, headaches, fatigue, aching muscles and a loss of appetite.

### Prevention

The best way to avoid catching the flu is through vaccination. High-risk individuals should get an annual flu shot to give their immune system an added boost. Because it takes time for the immune system to respond to the vaccine, physicians recommend taking the vaccine about six to eight weeks before flu season begins.

*Continued on Page 2*

## A publication of Breathe California of the Bay Area

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[www.lungsrus.org/  
newsletters.htm](http://www.lungsrus.org/newsletters.htm)

## What's Inside

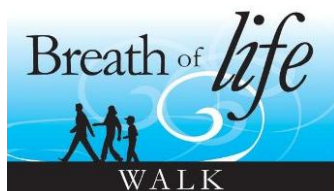
Join Us for the Breath of  
Life Walk, p. 2

School Bus Company  
Reaches Settlement to  
Reduce Exhaust Fumes,  
p. 3

Increased TB Funding  
Included in Global AIDS  
Bill, p. 3

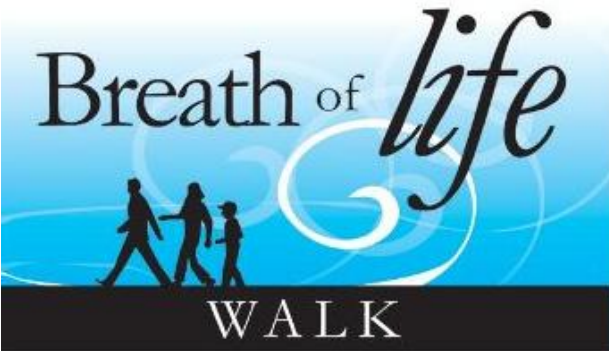
Info On Our Upcoming  
PAC Meeting  
p. 4

## It's Not Too Late! Join Us for This Year's Breath of Life Walk!



Saturday, October 4th,  
West Valley College

See Page 2 for more details



## On Your Mark... Get Set... **WALK!!**

Put on your sneakers because it's time to walk! On Saturday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, Breathe California will be hosting its 7<sup>th</sup> annual Breath of Life Walk at West Valley College in Saratoga. More than 500 walkers will come together in teams for the leisurely 5K walk and enjoy a day filled with food, prizes and family fun.

This is a great time for you to join us and your fellow community members to support those affected by lung disease and help rid lung disease from our community. One hundred percent of the proceeds will remain here locally to help fund Breathe California's lung health programs, like the Better Breathers Club.

Get together with friends and family to form a team and help collect pledges. Or, if you can't make it, sponsor a walker and help support asthma and lung disease patients!

To learn more or to register, visit [www.breathoflifewalk.org](http://www.breathoflifewalk.org) and click on the West Valley Walk link. There you can set up a team or personal webpage, sponsor a walker, and much more. You can also register by mail, phone (408) 998-5865 or stop by our office in person.

### **"Surviving the Flu Season"**

*continued from page 1*

Other means of prevention can include:

- Washing hands frequently
- Avoid sharing eating utensils
- Avoid touching face and mouth
- Avoid sick people and crowded areas
- Covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing
- Getting lots of exercise, rest and eating healthy

#### **Treatment**

Although we can take steps to prevent the flu, it can still sneak up on you undetected. If this happens,

there are some ways infected persons can treat the disease:

- Take antiviral medication. Young children can get better faster by taking antiviral medication within 48 hours of the first signs of illness.
- Plenty of bed rest.
- Drinking plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration and loosen mucous.
- Take aspirin and ibuprofen to relieve fever and discomfort.

Always consult your physician when treating the flu. The doctor may recommend taking particular or additional medication specific to your condition.

*To learn more about influenza, contact Breathe California by calling (408) 998-5865 or visiting [www.lungsrus.org](http://www.lungsrus.org)*



## **School Bus Company Reaches Settlement to Reduce Exhaust Fumes**

*Source: San Francisco Chronicle, August 7, 2008*

California's largest operator of school buses has reached a settlement to retrofit thousands of its buses to reduce the amount of harmful pollutants they emit. Without admitting any wrongdoing, Laidlaw Transportation agreed to spend close to \$5 million over the next five years to retrofit buses that are more than five years old, while also committing more than \$23 million to continue retrofitting other buses in its fleet or buy newer lower-emitting ones.

The agreement came as the result of a lawsuit by three environmental groups who contended that the bus company of violating Proposition 65, because the company did not post warnings that passengers could be exposed to cancer-causing chemicals in the form of diesel exhaust. The announcement comes one year after Durham School Services – the state's second largest school bus operator – agreed to a similar settlement, and ensures that the companies controlling more than 2/3 of the state's school buses will begin retrofitting or replacing its dirtiest buses by 2014.

"With this agreement, Laidlaw is showing that it is

possible to provide clean buses to California's school children," said James Wheaton of the Environmental Law Foundation and one of the suit's plaintiffs. "We hope all of the other bus operators follow Laidlaw's lead."

Glenda Lamont, spokeswoman for Laidlaw's parent company, FirstGroup America, added that the settlement shows that the company is "committed to protecting public health and the environment and going above and beyond the requirements of the law."

Several studies have documented the high risk for cancer, asthma and other respiratory diseases caused by diesel exhaust exposure, as well as the existence of high levels of such exhaust inside school buses. California has already passed anti-idling laws for school buses to help reduce such exposure and the state Air Resources Board is scheduled to consider regulations to require all pre-2007 model school buses to reduce diesel emissions by 85 percent by the end of 2013.

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## **Increased TB Funding Included in Global AIDS Bill**

*Source: Associated Press, July 25, 2008*

The U.S. House of Representatives and Senate have approved \$4 billion to fight the spread of tuberculosis (TB) in foreign countries as part of a Global AIDS bill that President Bush has championed.

The legislation – which extends funding for the expiring President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) – will provide \$48 billion over the next 5 years to combat AIDS, TB and malaria in Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. The foreign assistance bill almost triples funding for the initiative, part of which will go to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS.

Congressional approval of the legislation comes on the heels of a new CDC study which cited the need for better control of foreign-born TB cases. In the

U.S., the TB rates of immigrants are significantly higher, particularly among those born in Africa and Southeast Asia. The report concluded that the U.S. should beef up its global TB efforts as part of its drive to reduce its incidence domestically.

The reauthorization of PEPFAR was hailed by health officials and leaders of both parties as a major and worthy investment to combat the deadliest infectious diseases across the globe. AIDS, TB and malaria are the deadliest infectious diseases, killing approximately 5 million people across the globe each year. TB alone claims close to 1.7 million people annually and is also the leading cause of death among people with AIDS.

## Join Us for Our Upcoming PAC Meeting!!!

Parents of Asthmatic Children (PAC) meetings are held as resources and support groups for families who must confront asthma regularly. At these meetings, we discuss a number of issues related to your child's asthma, including the latest and most relevant news, legislation and asthma management techniques. Parents also have the opportunity to ask questions and network with other families to help their children lead fuller and healthier lives.

Our next meeting will focus on different methods of protecting your child from winter asthma triggers. We'll cover the common types of pollutants found inside your home and discuss how to reduce exposure and prevent illness. Light refreshments will be provided and children are invited to join us!

**When:** Thursday, November 13th, 2008  
6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

**Where:** Breathe California  
1469 Park Avenue  
San Jose, CA 95126

**Speaker:** Dr. Alan Goldsobel

**Topic:** Protect your child from winter triggers.



Please RSVP by Monday, November 10th to Tiffany Wong at [tiffany@lungsrus.org](mailto:tiffany@lungsrus.org) or (408) 998-5865.

**WE HOPE TO SEE YOU ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13TH!**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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