



Dinosaur Dialogue

At Suburban Pediatrics, you child is our priority: our goal is to provide quality care in a courteous, efficient, and professional manner.

September 2009

ALL ABOUT FLU

This issue is dedicated to everything you wanted to know about the flu. We have been seeing a lot of children sick with flu and have been answering your questions about flu—all at a time of year when we are typically more focused on baby checkups, sports physicals and runny noses from allergies.

We hope this newsletter will give you the information you need to stay as healthy as possible during

this flu season. Let's start things off by giving you a few of our favorite websites that you can troll for even more info than this "Dialogue" can hold!

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has the most up-to-date flu bulletins as well as good educational pages for everyone from kids to PhDs. Go to www.cdc.gov/flu to get started on the



links that most interest you.

The American Academy of Pediatrics also has flu information as well as parents' info on most anything else. Their site is www.aap.org.

Two other sites for a variety of health information, including flu, are: www.pediatrics.about.com and www.webmd.com.

Please let us know if there are any questions we can help answer for you.

Special points of interest:

- ☉ Look for us online at www.suburbanpeds.org
- ☉ Our Renaissance Square office, at Poplar Tent and Hwy 73 is very convenient to Huntersville, and western Cabarrus area!
- ☉ Next Beyond Lamaze class is Nov. 11th ...call now to register!
- ☉ Ask us about IHealth...a secure, portable medical record for you and more!



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GETTING SEASONAL VACCINE

You have probably heard media folks and us health care folks talk about "seasonal" flu and "H1N1" flu (formerly known as swine flu—we'll discuss that on page 3). To lessen confusion, try to think of seasonal flu as the usual, typical, or even "old" flu—what we are used to seeing every fall and winter here. The H1N1 flu is a new virus strain, which is why it is sometimes called "novel" (new) H1N1.

We are already giving sea-



sonal flu vaccine at Suburban Pediatrics. Please call for an appointment now to get your child's vaccine.

Seasonal flu vaccine is given by appointment only. Times will be available Monday-Thursday, 8:30 to 11:00 AM and 2:00 to 4:00 PM; Fridays, 8:30 to 11:00 AM and 3:30 to 5:30 PM. Saturday times will also be available through October from 9:30 to 11:15 AM.

We are once again offering both the nasal and injectable (shot) flu vaccine.

Please check with your insurance and your child's health care provider to see which vaccine is appropriate.

It is important for ALL children ages 6 mos and up to receive seasonal flu vaccine as soon as possible. If your child is younger than 6 mos, everyone in the home should get vaccinated to lessen the chance of bringing flu home.

H1N1 flu vaccine should come in October. We don't yet know where it will be offered.

Please note

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Children and the Flu

Flu is more dangerous than the common cold for children. Each year, seasonal flu places a large burden on the health and well-being of children and their families.

Children under age 5 are more likely to need an office visit and even hospitalization for the flu or related complications. Each year, **20,000 children younger than 5** are hospitalized.

Children under age 2 have the most severe complications from flu.

Some children will die from the flu each year. Highest risk children have other medical illnesses, but each year there are some deaths in otherwise healthy children.

Medical illnesses like **asthma** and **diabetes** put children at an especially high risk of developing serious flu complications.

This year there is a new and very different flu virus spreading worldwide among people of all ages called **2009 H1N1 flu** (formerly known as swine flu). It is expected to cause more people to get sick than usual, and may cause severe illness for some. Children are at high risk for this flu virus as well.

Vaccine Recommendations: Seasonal

One of the best ways to protect against seasonal flu and its complications in children is to get a seasonal flu vaccine each year (more about the separate H1N1 vaccine below).

It is recommended that all children aged 6 months and up receive a seasonal flu vaccine. Availability and hours at Suburban are listed on page 1 of this newsletter.

It is also recommended that people in contact with certain groups of children get a seasonal flu vaccine in order to protect the child(ren) from the flu. These people include: close contacts of children younger than 5 years old, care-

givers of children younger than 5 years old, close contacts of children with chronic health problems like asthma and diabetes, and all health care workers.

The flu vaccine is not approved for children younger than 6 months; however, this age group has a very high risk of flu complications. The best way to protect children younger than 6 months is to make sure all caregivers and household members get vaccinated.

The seasonal flu vaccine is updated every year because flu viruses change every year. So even if you or your children got a flu vaccine last year, you

still need to get a seasonal flu vaccine this year to be protected.

Children aged 6 months up to 9 years who are receiving vaccine for the first time will need two doses the first year they are vaccinated. The first dose "primes" the system. The second dose, given a month later, provides protection.

Seasonal flu vaccine is available in a nasal spray for children 2 years and older if they have no asthma or other contraindications.

Vaccine is available now and it is not too early to receive it. Call to make your child's seasonal flu vaccine appointment at Suburban now.

Vaccine Recommendations: 2009 H1N1

Vaccines are a powerful way to control flu, and the U.S. government is working closely with scientists in the public and private sector to get a 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine manufactured and distributed safely and quickly. Using the same research, technology, and clinical trials employed with seasonal flu vaccine manufacture, the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine has now been approved for public administration.

At Suburban, we are awaiting information on how and when the H1N1 vaccine will be given out in Cabarrus County. The CC Health Alliance will be directing this effort.

The seasonal flu vaccine is not expected to protect against the 2009 H1N1 flu, nor is the reverse true. It is recommended that both vaccines be given this year to achieve maximum flu protection. Both may be given on the

same day.

Initially, the H1N1 vaccine supply may be limited. The following groups are prioritized to receive the vaccine due to the risk of complications: pregnant women, close contacts of children under 6 months of age, health care workers with direct patient contact, all children 6 months through 4 years of age, and children 5 through 18 years of age with chronic medical illnesses.

What is 2009 H1N1 flu?

Formerly known as "swine flu", 2009 H1N1 flu is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. It was first detected in people in the United States in April of this year. The virus is spreading worldwide, person-to-person, much like any other flu virus. Because of the large numbers of people getting sick, the World Health Organization (WHO) stated that a "pandemic" of 2009 H1N1 flu was underway in June.

The virus was originally called "swine flu" because lab testing showed that many of the virus' genes were similar to flu virus seen in pigs (swine) in North America. Further study has shown that this is not true. In fact, the 2009 H1N1 flu virus has two genes from flu strains that are normally seen in Euro-

pean and Asian pigs, as well as bird (avian) genes and human genes. This new, or novel, mixture of genes is thought to be why so many people are not immune to it and are falling ill. Interestingly, people 64 years and older seem to be more immune to 2009 H1N1, indicating they may have had exposure to similar flu virus before.

2009 H1N1 flu acts very much like seasonal flu. It is spread by infected people coughing and sneezing virus into the air and onto objects. Healthy people can infect themselves by touching an object with flu virus on it and then touching their mouth, eyes, or nose. A sick person can spread flu virus from 1 day before

getting sick to 5 to 7 days after. Children may spread the virus longer.

Symptoms of H1N1 flu include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. Some people are also reporting diarrhea and vomiting, which is not typical for seasonal flu.

Most people sick with H1N1 flu will have a mild illness not requiring medical treatment. However, hospitalizations and deaths from infection with this virus have occurred. People who appear to be at higher risk for H1N1 flu complications include: pregnant women, children younger than 5, and people of any age with a chronic medical condition.

Avoiding ALL flu!

While getting seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccines are important ways to protect you and your children against flu this year, there are also some everyday actions you can take to help prevent the spread of germs like flu virus.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after



you use it.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough and sneeze.
- Alcohol-based hand cleaners may be used in place of soap and water.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.

- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Try to keep children under 5 out of crowds (shopping, events, church). People are spreading virus before they know they are sick.

Treating the flu

What if you or your child GETS the flu,,, seasonal or H1N1? Here are helpful tips:

- **STAY HOME.** Keeping away from others at school, work, church, shops, etc. helps limit the spread of the flu. You should stay home at least 24 hours past your last fever (without the use of fever-reducing medication). Wear a facemask around others whenever possible.
- Seek medical care if you have severe illness or you are at high risk

for flu complications.

- Drink clear fluids and rest.
- Use separate linens and dishes. These may be cleaned as usual.
- Wash hands or use hand gel frequently.
- If antiviral medicine is given, take all of it as directed.
- Take Tylenol or Motrin as needed for fever and pain. Do NOT give aspirin or Pepto-Bismol to children under 18 years.

SEEK EMERGENCY CARE IF YOUR CHILD EXPERIENCES ANY:

- Trouble breathing
- Blue or gray skin color
- Absence of urine for >8 hours
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Irritability to point of not wanting to be held
- Flu symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough

Flu MYTHS

Some interesting and FALSE information is spreading around our community almost as fast as the flu virus! See if you've heard any of these:

I can get swine flu from eating pork. The H1N1 flu virus is not spread by food, including pork. See page 3 for an explanation of where the name "swine flu" came from earlier this year.

"Swine flu parties" are a good way to get natural immunity to the flu. A swine flu party is where healthy people deliberately have close contact with a person who has H1N1 flu. While most people are only having mild illness with H1N1 flu, there is no way to predict those who will have severe disease, other complications, or even death. So this strategy is risky and not recommended.

I will get the flu from the flu vaccine. This is heard every year, probably because anytime a sore throat, cold, or any other symptom happens remotely near the time a person receives a flu vaccine, it makes it easy to blame the vaccine. The truth is that there is no whole virus in the vaccine capable of causing symptoms. Do we get meningitis

from the meningitis vaccine? Measles from the measles vaccine?

It's OK for my baby to go to the store with me because I'll have him in his car seat. Even if your baby touches nothing, he is breathing in germs from everyone else during flu season. A blanket will not filter the air properly. Also, you will be touching many things and may not remember to wash your hands before touching him or his belongings every time.

Flu is only spread through the air. Flu virus can live on objects and infect a person for 2 to 8 hours. It is important to regularly clean surfaces where a sick person has been. Use a household disinfectant according to directions.

I should stop nursing my baby if I get the flu. Breastmilk will not pass virus to your baby and may have helpful antibodies in it. If possible, have someone who is not sick feed your baby your expressed breast milk. If you must nurse directly, wear a face-mask and carefully wash hands when caring for your baby.

My baby should stop nursing if she

gets the flu. Give your baby many chances to breastfeed throughout the illness. The fluid babies get from breast milk is better than water, juice, or Pedialyte® because it also helps protect your baby's immune system.

I can catch the flu from drinking water. Tap water that has been treated by conventional disinfection processes does not pose a risk of transmitting flu virus. The levels of chlorine used in drinking water are high enough to inactivate flu virus. This is also true of treated water in pools, spas, and water parks. Remember, however, that flu virus can be spread at recreational places just by people contact or by touching objects that are virus contaminated.

I got the swine flu shot in 1976, so I don't need the swine flu shot now. The 1976 virus and the 2009 H1N1 virus are different enough that it is unlikely a person vaccinated in 1976 has full protection from the 2009 H1N1. The 2009 vaccine should still be given, especially if you are in a high risk group for flu complications.

A Final NON-FLU Note!

FINALLY... something to read that is NOT about flu! Suburban Pediatrics held its 11th Annual Golf Tournament this past July 28th. Traditionally held the fourth Monday of July each year, we were once again blessed with some cloud cover and weather that was a wee bit cooler than average.

Cabarrus Country Club graciously opened its facility to our 61 youngsters who had signed up to play. Wonderful adult captains were available for the teams, including Drs. Guerriero, Greenlee and Lods. For the first time ever, Dr. Stegman was unable to attend and he was missed (though he did request a

shirt!).

After a lot of fun on the links, everyone enjoyed a pizza lunch and cooled off with snow cones. First place honors in the tournament went to "Team Livengood": the sons, nephew, and husband of our Medical Supervisor Susan Livengood.

Many, many thanks to our office staff who volunteered their time to organize this year's tournament and ensure a fun day for our children. Come play with us next year!



fun day for
dren. Come
us next

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