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Influenza 2020-2021

Influenza

Otherwise known as the “flu”, influenza is a viral infection that attacks the respiratory system including the nose, throat, and lungs. For most individuals, influenza resolves on its own. However, for some patients, influenza and its complications can be deadly.

High Risk Patients

- Children under age 5
- Adults over age 65
- Residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities
- Pregnant women and women up to two weeks postpartum
- Patients with weakened immune systems
- Patients with chronic illnesses

Common Symptoms

- Fever / Chills
- Headache / Body aches
- Fatigue
- Cough / Sore Throat
- Sneezing / Runny Nose
- Nausea / Vomiting / Diarrhea

Influenza Vaccines

Vaccines available from our pharmacy include:

- **Afluria Quad** - inactivated, quadrivalent vaccine approved for patients 3 years and older
- **Fluzone HD** - inactivated, quadrivalent vaccine containing a higher dose for patients 65 years and older
- **Fluad** - inactivated, quadrivalent vaccine containing an adjuvant for patients 65 years and older
- **Flublok** - egg-free, recombinant, quadrivalent vaccine for patients 18 years and older

References: CDC @ www.cdc.gov, Clinical Pharmacology @ www.clinicalpharmacology.com, Pharmacist's Letter @ www.pharmacistsletter.com

CDC Recommendations

- **Vaccine Options** - the CDC has no preference for any one vaccine formulation over another. Providers may choose any licensed, age-appropriate flu vaccine.
- **Egg Allergies** - Flublok is the only vaccine that is completely egg-free. However, according to the CDC, people who have experienced only hives after exposure to eggs can get ANY licensed flu vaccine that is appropriate for their age and health. For people who have experienced symptoms other than hives after exposure to eggs (angioedema, respiratory distress, lightheadedness, recurrent emesis, or who have needed Epinephrine or another emergency medical intervention) can also get ANY licensed flu vaccine that is appropriate for their age and health, but the vaccine should be given in a medical setting (i.e. hospital, health department, physician office) and supervised by a health care provider who is able to manage severe allergic conditions.
- **Nasal Spray Flu Vaccine** - FluMist is another option for influenza vaccination. However, it is only approved in non-pregnant individuals, ages 2-49, and cannot be used in some medical conditions.

Influenza Treatment

In the event that a patient is not vaccinated or the vaccination was not successful, there is an antiviral medication available known as **Tamiflu (Oseltamivir)** approved to reduce the severity of symptoms and/or shorten the length of the illness.

- **Treatment:** Tamiflu 75mg by mouth twice daily for 5 days in Adults, Geriatric, and Adolescent patients.
- **Prophylaxis:** typically Tamiflu 75mg once daily for 10 days, but may be given up to 6 weeks.
- Dose adjustments are recommended for adult patients with a Creatinine Clearance of 60mL/min or less.