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Influenza Update

12/29/09

Yea! For the first time in 11 weeks, the number of reported influenza-like illnesses (ILI) and hospitalizations for influenza has dropped below what is considered the "epidemic" level threshold. Additionally, the number of states reporting widespread illness from influenza has dropped to 7 (recall that at its height, the number of states reporting widespread illness was up to 42). On the very pretty color-coded CDC map, Ohio now is reporting only sporadic cases and most of the severe activity is now taking place on the West Coast.

There are now over 36,000 confirmed cases of H1N1 influenza and 1630 deaths (almost 600 deaths in children under 17), although estimates of the true number range considerably higher. As detailed in our last email blast, the true number may be 79 times higher. Most cases of H1N1 influenza continue to be mild, but children with weakened immune systems, severe asthma, and underlying neurological problems are still at significant risk. Almost all cases of influenza reported nationally are still the H1N1 strain. But typically seasonal influenza begins in January, and we all have to be concerned about the implications of a resurgence in influenza activity in these next few weeks. We are especially concerned about the impact of Christmas and New Year's travel on the spread of influenza. We recently reviewed an article that is relevant to this discussion entitled, "The September epidemic of asthma hospitalization". In this study, Canadian researchers looked at the peak incidence of asthma in preschool, school age and adult populations. Over a 4 year period, and the study of over 250,000 hospitalizations, they found that the September asthma hospitalization epidemic peak in school aged children, occurred on average, 17.7 days after Labor Day Monday (the first Monday in September). Similar epidemics in preschool children peaked 1.7 days later and in adults 6.3 days later. The epidemics in all ages peaked 4.2 days earlier in northernmost provinces than in southernmost provinces. The theory behind this peak is that most Canadian children return to school the day after Labor Day, spread colds and other viruses and those who are predisposed to developing asthma will have flares of their asthma. The recommendation is that pediatricians tweak asthma management in late summer to help deal with this predicted spike. What is relevant to us at this time is that we can almost predict a peak in influenza illness activity in the next few weeks following holiday travel and the return to school. This makes vaccination against both H1N1 and seasonal flu very important in these next few weeks.

We have identified many patients who have still not received seasonal flu vaccination, especially following the shortages experienced last month. Many others have not received H1N1 vaccine (or in children under 9 years, have only received 1 dose). We are excited to report that we have a sufficient amount of seasonal flu vaccine and plenty of H1N1 vaccine and would like to provide easy access to our patients to be appropriately vaccinated.

We will once again be conducting a mass clinic on Thursday, January 7, 2010. Our office has received sufficient vaccine and our plan is to vaccinate those patients who have still not received the first dose while also providing second doses for kids that are 9 years of age and

younger. We ask that you once again email a new request for vaccine to H1N1@senderspediatrics.com and we will be in contact with you by early next week. (We will not be responding to previous emails sent to that address prior to today). Please be sure to include the following information in your email:

1. Child's name
2. Child's date of birth
3. Your preferred contact phone number

Prior to your arrival at the clinic, it is imperative that you register with the Ohio Department of Health at <https://h1n1vaccine.odh.ohio.gov/> and print out your registration form and number.

If there is sufficient interest (and based on our internal tabulations, there are still many high-risk patients who are insufficiently vaccinated), we will reinstate our Sunday flu clinics in the month of January. For patients who are coming for well visits in the next few weeks, we ask that you register your child at <https://h1n1vaccine.odh.ohio.gov/> and we should be able to provide the vaccine at that visit. Please continue to watch for our future email blasts and [Facebook](#) updates informing you of future clinics.

A few other exciting things going on at Senders Pediatrics:

- During the peak H1N1 season, we scaled back on our well visits to accommodate our ill patients. With the brief lull in influenza activity that we are currently experiencing, **we strongly encourage families of children with birthdays from November to March, to schedule their well visits in the next few weeks.**
- We are excited to welcome Dr. Jill Sangree back from her maternity leave of three months. Now the mother of two, Dr. Jill brings new experiences and wonderful perspective to all of her patient encounters.
- Join Senders Pediatrics [Facebook Fan Page](#). We would love if you would "friend us" so that we have one more way of communicating with our patients. There are also some fun things about upcoming events that you won't want to miss.
- Love our office? This is your chance to show your friends, family and co workers why you like Senders Pediatrics. Until February 28, 2010, we will be rewarding our patients for new referrals to our office. If you refer a new patient to our office who schedules a well child exam, you will receive a \$20 Target gift certificate. There are no limitations.
- Testimonials - We have developed a new testimonial section on our website. If you have had a truly positive experience in our office and would like to help us share what makes us unique with others, please email alaureano@senderspediatrics.com. We strongly appreciate your support!
- Check out our Website - There is a lot of important medical information on our website that is of particular interest during cold and flu season. Check out the Health Topics bar at www.senderspediatrics.com.

As always, thank you for your continued support of our practice. We look forward to taking care of your family's needs this winter.

Sincerely,
Senders Pediatrics

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