

Pavilion Pediatrics January Newsletter

January 15, 2018



Respiratory Viral Season

Happy New Year to all of our families at Pavilion Pediatrics. You must have noticed that we are knee-deep in respiratory viral season. Contrary to what our well-intended forebears would tell us, we don't catch colds by going out into the cold, but rather we do so more often in the winter due to our increased contact with one another as we spend more time indoors. Symptoms such as runny nose, itchy eyes, cough, and sore throat are most commonly due to viruses: either rhinovirus, the common cold, or any other of its numerous viral cousins. These symptoms usually last 5-7 days, with cough often lingering for weeks after a viral illness. Treatment for viral illnesses is geared toward symptomatic relief, while the virus runs its course. Antibiotics cannot treat viral illness. However, medications such as tylenol and ibuprofen are helpful in alleviating the pain associated with illness, and studies have shown that remedies such as using a vaporizer in the bedroom and honey (if your child is over one year of age) are as effective as over-the-counter (OTC) cough and cold remedies, without the potentially dangerous side effects


of these preparations. In fact, in 2008 the FDA came out with a statement advising against the use of OTC cough and cold remedies for children under two years of age, and the Consumer Healthcare Products Association later broadened the recommendation to include children under the age of four. In summary, the goal in treating these common illnesses is symptomatic relief, while the virus runs its natural course; and antibiotics are NOT indicated. Reasons to seek evaluation in the office (or emergency room if urgent) include: difficulty breathing, concern for focal illness such as an ear infection or pneumonia, or the inability of your child to maintain proper hydration during the course of his or her illness (this is best measured by urine output, and in general we would like to see children urinating at least once in a six-eight hour period). As always, if you have questions, do not hesitate to reach out and ask us.

Influenza

As of January 15th, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported that influenza was widespread in 49 states during the week ending Jan. 6, with flu hospitalizations nearly twice the level seen the previous week and seven additional pediatric deaths reported, bringing the season's total to 20. It is not too late for you or your child to get flu vaccines. It has been shown that if a person contracts flu after having been vaccinated, the illness is much less severe than had he or she not been vaccinated. Studies from last year showed that 90% of pediatric hospitalizations and deaths due to flu were occurred in those who were unvaccinated. As a reminder, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends that ALL children over six months of age receive the flu vaccine, ideally by the end of October. Children ages 0-8 who are receiving the flu vaccine for the first time require two injections, separated by one month. All others require just one injection. As was the case last year, there will be no flu mist available this year, after studies revealed that it provided less coverage against Influenza A than the injection. The injectable flu vaccine is an inactivated vaccine, meaning that it cannot give flu to the recipient. Side effects of the injection are minimal and may include mild tenderness at the site of the injection. One thing that has been shown year after year is that flu can be incredibly dangerous, causing significant morbidity and mortality to those who are otherwise perfectly healthy. For this reason, we, with great confidence, recommend the flu vaccine for all of our patients over six months of age. For those of you with infants less than six months of age, the best way to protect them is to have all family members vaccinated, thereby decreasing the likelihood of exposure to the infant. This is called

cocooning. Please call our office to schedule a flu vaccine visit as soon as possible, if you have not already done so.

The flu and you



Getting a flu vaccine is the first and most important step in protecting yourself and your family against seasonal flu.

1. The CDC recommends that only the flu shot (not nasal spray vaccine) be given during the 2016-2017 flu season.
2. Seasonal flu activity often begins to increase in October.
3. Young children are at higher risk for serious flu complications.
4. Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu vaccine every season.
5. Vaccines are safe; U.S. law requires years of testing to ensure safety.

 **APIC**
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology

Learn more about the flu and the flu shot at
apic.org/infectionpreventionandyou and cdc.gov/flu.

*this graphic mentions the 2016-2017 season but is relevant for the coming season as well

Preventive Medicine: the HPV vaccine

It has been ten years since a vaccine against the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) has been available. Recent studies have shown that since the introduction of the HPV vaccine, there has been up to a 90% reduction in transmission of HPV as well as HPV-related disease, including genital warts, and the pre-cancerous changes to cells that lead to cervical and oropharyngeal cancer. Prior to the HPV vaccine, HPV was incredibly prevalent, with some researchers stating that virtually all sexually active adults would encounter the virus in their lifetime. Once contracting an HPV virus, your chance of developing cancer is 1/100. So we have a unique opportunity with the HPV vaccine to protect ourselves against a very commonly-encountered virus, one that can lead to cervical, penile, and oropharyngeal cancers. The vaccine is available for boys and girls between the ages of 9 and 26, and is part of a series. If a child starts the vaccine before his or her 15th birthday, he or she only requires two vaccines, separated by six months. After fifteen years of age, young adults require three vaccines, the second one month after the first, and the third six months after the first. We can help you abide by these guidelines when scheduling vaccine visits at the office. Side effects of the HPV vaccine are similar to those of other vaccines, and they include, most commonly, tenderness at the site of injection. The HPV vaccine, while being one of the “newer” vaccines has been subject to the same safety screening

process as all vaccines and has been shown to be safe for all children/adolescents in the age range mentioned above.



ENDNOTE: Fever

One of the most common questions we get from our families is: How high is too high for a fever? While children often feel quite uncomfortable with high fevers, there is no number that in and of itself is cause for alarm. High fevers in fact can often accompany relatively minor viral illnesses. The other more important questions to consider in the setting of fever are: Is my child's mood or energy improving with tylenol or ibuprofen, such that he or she is able to stay well-hydrated?, and Is he or she able to breathe comfortably? If the answers to these questions are yes, you are handling the virus and fever just fine. In fact, if your child is not terribly uncomfortable and able to maintain oral intake, you do not even need to treat a fever. A fever is the body's natural response to infection, and your child having one suggests that he or she is mounting an appropriate response to the infection. So, when is fever (which is defined as 100.4 fahrenheit or higher) concerning? You should notify your child's pediatrician if: your child is less than two months of age and has a fever; your child has had a fever for 5-7 days with no symptoms suggestive of infection, such as runny nose, cough, sore throat; or your child has a fever and he or she is either having difficulty breathing or breathing rapidly or is unable to maintain oral intake. Please do not hesitate to seek our guidance if you are worried about your child.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the information found here, we encourage you to bring them to your child's pediatrician.

[Read more on our website](#)

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