

## INFLUENZA UPDATE DECEMBER, 2014

The current Influenza Season is underway and the CDC has reported that the Influenza "A" virus has mutated from the original version, otherwise known as a genetic "drift," to a new strain called H3N2. The "drift" occurred AFTER this year's flu vaccine was formulated.

The current Flu vaccine DOES cover H1N1 and Influenza "B" quite well. However, most children contract the "A" form of the virus. Because of this, it is expected that this will be a harsher Flu season than most and more children may require hospitalization.

Symptoms of Influenza include a combination of the following symptoms:

- Fever above 100.4°F
- Persistent cough
- Looking ill and not playful; malaise; poor feeding
- Headaches
- Upper respiratory symptoms
  - Nasal congestion worse than an average "cold."
  - Sore throat, difficulty swallowing
- Vomiting (usually without diarrhea)
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If you notice your child has a combination of these symptoms make an appointment to see your Primary Care Provider within 24 hours. It is not necessary to come to the Emergency Room.

If your child tests positive for Influenza "A", then Tamiflu (Oseltamivir) may be prescribed to help decrease the severity of symptoms and shorten the course of illness from 2 weeks to closer to 4-5 days.

Other measures to take:

- Make sure your child stays hydrated by drinking plenty of clear fluids
- Use a humidifier when they sleep
- Use frequent nasal saline to clear the nose of thick secretions to aid in breathing
- Fever is our friend: we do NOT treat fever unless a child seems to be very irritable or suffering with it. Fever helps to KILL the virus faster!! Simply keep your child well- hydrated with plenty of fluids and wear loose clothing so as not to overheat.
- If child is very irritable or seems to be suffering with fever or sore throat, start with Ibuprofen and dose according to the directions on the bottle and give every 6-8 hours with food and fluids so as not to upset the stomach. If child is vomiting, then switch to Tylenol.  
DO NOT ALTERNATE TYLENOL AND IBUPROFEN!!
- Rest, stay home from school or day care
- Use Chlorox wipes or Lysol wipes on surfaces, handles, drawer/door knobs, bathroom daily
- WASH HANDS FREQUENTLY
- Have your child wear a mask; OR wear the mask yourself to keep from catching the virus
- Do not share drinks, utensils, or toys