Influenza Season

The 2017-2018 Influenza season saw record breaking hospitalizations and a record 179 pediatric deaths attributable to Influenza and influenza-like illnesses. And, as has been well established for years, the best treatment is prevention through flu vaccination.

Influenza vaccine can prevent flu illness and hospitalization. CDC estimates that influenza vaccination prevented approximately 5.1 million influenza illnesses. Influenza vaccination was found to reduce deaths in children. Influenza vaccination may make illness milder.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the CDC’s Advisory Council on Immunization practices (ACIP) and nearly all other medical authorities recommend vaccination for all people over the age of 6 months. Optimally, vaccination should occur before onset of influenza activity in the community. We recommend vaccination by the end of October, if possible. To avoid missed opportunities for vaccination, providers should offer vaccination during routine health care visits and hospitalizations when vaccine is available. Vaccination efforts should continue throughout the season because the duration of the influenza season varies and influenza activity might not occur in certain communities until February or March. Vaccine administered in December or later is likely to be beneficial even if given after the influenza season has begun.

The Inactivated Influenza Vaccine (IIV), given by intramuscular injection will be readily available this fall. The Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine (LAIV) given by intranasal inhalation will also be available for pediatric patients. However, the AAP is on record as preferring the IV over the LAIV, placing them at odds with the ACIP. You can read about these recommendations at: www.aappublications.org/news/2018/06/07/influenza060718.

ZMCHD encourages all patients to get flu shots from their primary care provider. For those unable to do so, ZMCHD is offering flu shot clinics at four different locations and times as listed below.

Zanesville-Muskingum County Health Department

Flu Shot Clinics:

205 N. 7th Street, Zanesville, OH 43701
Phone: 740-454-9741
Clinic Fax: 740-452-5154
E-mail: jackb@zmchd.org

10/2, drive thru, 2-6pm, Perry Township Fire Dept
10/13, drive thru, 10am-2pm, Southtown Gym
10/19, drive thru, 10am-2pm, Zane State College
10/23, drive thru & walk in, 2-6pm, Dresden Fire Dept

About This Newsletter

As the new medical director for the Zanesville-Muskingum County Health Department (ZMCHD), I have learned much about what is available to improve the health of our community. And, having practiced for years without knowing much about the health department, I am now aware of multiple instances where I would have been a better physician to my patients had I known about and availed myself of the services available from the health department. Therefore, I have a goal of improving communication between local physicians and the health department, including increasing your awareness of services available. I will send a newsletter quarterly, so I will not overwhelm you with information. I hope you find this useful.

Sincerely—

Jack Butterfield, MD
Medical Director, ZMCHD