

ABC FAMILY PEDIATRICIANS

September 2009

To Our Patients,

We have all heard so much about novel H1N1 influenza ( swine flu) that it is all too easy to forget about the dangers of seasonal influenza. Although the H1N1 vaccine is not yet approved, the seasonal flu vaccines are now available. **The seasonal flu vaccine will not protect from H1N1 illness.** We plan to send another information letter with the H1N1 vaccine recommendations, as soon as the vaccine is approved and distributed.

For 2009-2010, the Centers for Disease Control and American Academy of Pediatrics both recommend an annual flu vaccine for the following groups:

- All Children 6 months to and including 18 years**
- Children with long term health problems: heart disease; lung disease including asthma; metabolic disease such as diabetes; seizures; immunosuppression
- Children age 6 months to 18 years on long term aspirin therapy.
- Household contacts (including all siblings) of infants under 6 months of age.

Those children under the age of 9 years getting the flu vaccine for the first time will need a booster dose one month later. Also if your child is less than 9 years old and received their first flu vaccine last season and only received 1 dose, he or she will need a booster dose one month later this season.

There is a **nasal flu vaccine** (Flumist) available for those who wish to avoid an injection. This vaccine is recommended for healthy people between the ages of 2 and 49 years. **There is increasing evidence that this vaccine is more protective than the injectable vaccine.** It cannot be given to people with a medical condition that places them at high risk for complications from influenza, including those with chronic heart or lung disease, such as asthma; people with medical conditions such as diabetes or kidney failure; or people with illnesses that weaken the immune system, or who take medications that can weaken the immune system. In addition, it cannot be given to children receiving aspirin. It should not be given to anyone who is in close contact with someone who has a severely weakened immune system. Please be aware that we have a **limited supply of Flumist**, because in prior years there has been less demand for this vaccine. You may want to contact your insurance company to determine if Flumist will be covered. Please tell staff that you are requesting **Flumist** when you schedule your appointment. We will do our best to accommodate this request.

We will do our best to protect all our patients from influenza in a timely manner.

Relay Health information – at two of our offices, we offer this method of communication to request your flu appointment. Our Trexlertown and Laurys Station offices are currently registered with Relay Health. At these sites, we are hoping to avoid “telephone tag” and phone call messages by having our patients request their flu appointment on-line. Go online to [www.relayhealth.com](http://www.relayhealth.com). If you have not used Relay Health before, click Register as New User. Use a Relay<sup>SM</sup> message to request your flu vaccine appointment. Choose your Doctor’s website. Need Help? E-Mail [support@relayhealth.com](mailto:support@relayhealth.com) or call 1-866-735-2963 (1-866-RELAY-ME).

We will be holding flu clinics on various evenings and weekends in our offices – these are scheduled **by appointment only**. Please contact your usual office site to find out when the flu vaccine clinics are being held. For some offices, you can use Relay Health to request an appointment.

Please bring your insurance card to the flu clinic – we will need a copy for proper billing.

Sincerely,  
Your Pediatricians at ABC Family Pediatricians