

The Vantage Voice...E Newsletter

5/1/2009

What you need to know about... the Swine Flu

As this week's news brings us more and more information about the swine flu, many of our patients are calling in with questions...

- How do I know if I have it?
- How can I keep from getting it?
- Should I cancel my trip to Cancun?
- Can you write me a prescription for Tamiflu?



We at Vantage Physicians feel the best thing you can do for yourself and those you care about is to be educated about the swine flu and not panic.

The signs and symptoms of swine flu...in people are similar to other variations of flu. These include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting associated with swine flu. **If you have a fever, or a combination of these symptoms that are unusual for you, please CALL the office.** DO NOT come to the office without calling first.

To keep from getting the flu...first and foremost: wash your hands! 20 seconds under warm water with soap. Use hand sanitizer frequently during the day. Try to no touch surfaces that may be contaminated with the flu virus. Avoid close contact with people who may be sick. Try to stay in good general health, get plenty of rest, be physically active, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious food.

Before you head out to the airport, check the CDC website for the current travel advisories. As of today, there are no prohibitions against travel, but the advice of the CDC is to avoid non-essential travel to Mexico. It's up to you to decide if your trip is essential or non-essential...

To avoid causing unnecessary shortages of Tamiflu, physicians are being encouraged to write prescriptions only for those with symptoms. Dr. Kershisnik agrees with this socially responsible approach. There are enough antivirals in reserve within the United States. It will be late next week before they can be distributed throughout the pharmacy system. Moreover, inappropriate consumption of antivirals may promote resistance to the drug. **If you think you have symptoms of the swine flu, including a fever, call the office. We are happy to write prescriptions for antivirals when indicated.**

Sources

The best source for information we have comes directly from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and you can access this information too on the internet. The link is: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/swineflu_you.htm. The Thurston County Health Department also has a Webpage at: www.co.thurston.wa.us/health and they have a public information line you can call for updates at: (360)709-3080. For traveler's information go to: <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/>

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