

MENTOR-NHC

Monthly Education, News, and Tips to Optimize Reliability of Nursing Home Care

September 2006

INFLUENZA UPDATE 2006

Please Remind Staff, Residents, and Family of These Important Facts:

- Influenza, also known as the flu, is the sixth leading cause of death among U.S. adults
- The influenza shot cannot cause the flu
- Each year, approximately 36,000 people die from influenza and another 114,000 are hospitalized
- Influenza is a highly contagious disease that is spread by coughing, sneezing, direct physical contact with an infected individual, as well as contact with objects where the virus may be present such as, doorknobs, keyboards, and telephones.
- Symptoms of influenza include fever, extreme fatigue, headache, and body aches
- You may not be experiencing symptoms, yet you still may be highly contagious
- Flu shots are 70-90% effective in preventing influenza in healthy people under the age of 65

The CMS Rule

The finalized rule established in October 2005 by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) requires that certified Medicare and Medicaid nursing homes must PROVIDE influenza and pneumococcal immunizations and ensure that residents RECEIVE the immunizations.

- The influenza immunization must be offered annually between October 1 and March 31
- Each resident must be immunized against influenza and pneumococcal disease unless medically contraindicated or the resident or resident's legal representative refuses immunization
- The pneumococcal immunization must be offered once if there is no history of immunization
- Before offering the influenza and pneumococcal immunizations, each resident and/or his/her legal representative must receive education about the benefits and potential side effects of the immunizations

Supplemental Items, Section W of the Minimum Data Set (MDS) captures immunization related information to determine the rate of vaccination and causes of non-vaccination.

Summary of Recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

The following are suggestions from the CDC for prevention of influenza:

- Monitor for respiratory illness
- Educate personnel, residents, and family
- Develop an influenza testing plan
- Review or develop a respiratory hygiene etiquette program
- Enforce standard infection control precautions
- Implement droplet precautions
- Enact restrictions for ill visitors and healthcare personnel
- Use antiviral chemoprophylaxis

Free Immunization Materials

Pocket Information Guides

The "Influenza Vaccination Pocket Information Guide" by the National Influenza Vaccine Summit offers an abundance of information about flu vaccines. Also, the Immunization Action Coalition (IAC) offers the "Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Vaccination Pocket Guide" as an adjunct to the influenza guide. Both are available at www.immunize.org/pocketguides.

CDC 2006-2007 Flu Gallery

The CDC launched their online "Flu Gallery" featuring educational materials for use during the 2006-2007 influenza immunization season. The gallery contains flyers, posters, and brochures, available in English and Spanish. Visit the CDC Flu Gallery at www.cdc.gov/flu/gallery.



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