



MEET OUR PROVIDERS

Our physician spotlight for this edition is Prashant Parikh, MD. He is a Board Certified Family Physician at TriValley's Lansdale office. Dr. Parikh completed a year of Surgery residency and two years of Family Medicine residency at Hahnemann Hospital, where he received the Family Practice resident teaching award in his third year. His undergraduate training was at Grant Medical College in Bombay, India.

After completing his residency training, Dr. Parikh helped originate a Hospitalist program at Montgomery Hospital in Norristown. While developing this program, he faced many new obstacles and challenges that needed to be solved. Difficult to all new Hospitalist programs is the challenge of keeping the Primary Care Providers informed while being sensitive to the

An Influenza Guide for Parents

(Information provided by the CDC)

What is the flu?

The flu (influenza) is an infection of the nose, throat and lungs caused by a flu virus. Flu viruses can cause illness, hospital stays and deaths in the US. There are many different flu viruses.

What is the 2009 H1N1 flu?

H1N1 flu (sometimes call swine flu) is a new and very different flu virus that is spreading worldwide. This flu season, scientists expect both 2009 H1N1 and seasonal flu to cause more people to get sick than a regular flu season.

How serious is the flu?

Most people with H1N1 have had mild illness and have not needed medical care and the same is true of seasonal flu. However, the flu can be serious, especially for young children (under the age of 2 years) and children of any age who have certain chronic medical conditions such as asthma and other lung problems, diabetes, weakened immune systems, kidney disease, heart problems and neurological and neuromuscular disorders. Especially at risk are pregnant women.

How does the flu spread?

Both H1N1 and seasonal flu are thought to spread mostly from person to person through coughs and sneezes of people who are sick with flu. People also may get sick by touching something with flu viruses on it (such as a shopping cart) and then touching their mouth, nose or eyes.

What are the symptoms of the flu? Symptoms of both flus can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, body aches, headache, chills fatigue and GI symptoms. Some people sick with the flu will not have a fever.

How long can a sick person spread the flu to others?

People infected with either flu may shed virus from one day **before** getting sick until 7 days after. However, some people may shed virus longer.

How can I protect myself and my child?

Get a seasonal flu vaccine for yourself and for your child. Get a 2009 H1N1 vaccine for your child and ask you doctor about whether you should get one also. Take and encourage your child to take everyday steps that can help prevent the spread of germs:

- * Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw away after use.
- * Stay away from people who are sick.
- * Wash your hands often with soap and water or antibacterial hand gel.
- * Separate sick people within your household as much as possible.

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specialist referrals with hospital patient admissions. This along with deciding whether to refer a patient to the Hospitalist service or a specialist service has allowed Dr Parikh to utilize diplomacy in the professional setting and find what is best for the patient while providing excellent medical care and keeping the physicians cooperating.

During his “non-office” time, Dr. Parikh enjoys travelling, listening to music and sports. His favorite places for travel have been the Grand Canyon and Aruba where he visited with his now 5th grade daughter and his wife, Dipti Shah-Parikh, M.D., who is a local OB/GYN physician. His family also supports local community groups including organizing health care clinics and educating the community in seminar settings on topics of health care and fund raising.

Dr. Parikh has been a great addition to our Lansdale office. He is passionate about his patients, ensuring that they get the best possible medical care. He stresses preventive medicine and enjoys taking care of the challenging chronic patients with difficult clinical pictures. We are proud that he has joined TriValley Primary Care.

Comments?

If you have comments or ideas for other topics, contact the editor at:

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Billing Corner: Medicare Plans

Insurer's are eliminating several Medicare Advantage plans in the BuxMont area. TriValley's participation with Medicare Advantage plans is limited to Keystone 65 plans, Personal Choice 65, Aetna Medicare plans, and select Blue Shield plans. TriValley does not accept any other Medicare Advantage Plans.

TriValley would prefer that its Medicare eligible patients enroll in what is now called “the Original Medicare.” It offers free choice as to physician and facility (hospital and nursing homes, etc.). See www.medicare.gov/coverage/home.asp for the program coverage of Original Medicare. Because there are no intervening contractual ties between you and TriValley, TriValley providers have to earn your trust and meet your needs at every visit. And, you are free to make another selection at any time. In addition, Medicare Advantage plans have had a spotty reputation for staying in certain Pennsylvania counties over an extended period. For these and other reasons, you are encouraged to enroll in (or stay in) “Original Medicare.”

Influenza Guide (continued)

* Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread that way.

Is there a vaccine to protect us from the flu?

A yearly seasonal flu vaccine is the first and most important step in protecting against seasonal flu. This vaccine is recommended for children 6 months to 18 years of age and others who are in close contact with children.

A vaccine against 2009 H1N1 flu is being distributed this year. The vaccine is recommended for patients who are 6 months through 24 years of age, people in close contact with that age group, pregnant women, and people with certain chronic medical conditions. Talk to your doctor for more information.

There are some populations that are especially at risk for H1N1 complications and should get the vaccine as early as possible.

These groups are pregnant women as the vaccine can protect them and their young infants. Pregnant women have a higher risk for complications. People who are caregivers or guardians for infants younger than 6 months are recommended to get the H1N1 vaccine as well as healthcare and emergency service personnel.

Is there medicine to treat the flu?

Antiviral drugs can treat both seasonal and H1N1 flu types. The priority for these medications is to treat seriously ill individuals and people in high-risk groups. It is important that these medications are started within 48 hours of onset of the flu symptoms.

What can I do if I or my child gets sick?

For those over 5 years and otherwise healthy, consult your doctor only as needed. Make sure the ill person gets plenty of rest and fluids. IF your child is younger than 5 years or if your child has underlying medical conditions, ask the doctor if an examination is needed. These individuals are at higher risk of serious complication from flu infection. Talk to your doctor early if you are worried about your child's illness.

Some signs of concern might be:

* fast breathing or trouble breathing * gray skin color
* severe or persistent vomiting * not drinking enough fluid

* being so irritable that your child does not want to be held

* Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough

* Has other conditions (like heart or lung disease, diabetes or asthma) and develops flu symptoms.

Keep your child away from school, day camps, day care, the babysitter, etc., if they are ill. Adults should limit their exposure to other people if they are ill or feel they may have the flu. Returning to work or school may happen once the fever is gone for 24 hours without any fever reducing medication.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov or www.flu.gov.