Influenza

In case somehow you haven’t noticed the influenza season has hit big and it's bad.

To give some historical perspective let us not forget the 1918 influenza epidemic. The flu epidemic came in 1918 when World War I led to 20 million deaths over four years. The flu killed double that amount and perhaps five times that amount in 18 months. Experts believe between 50 and 100 million people were killed by that virus.

This year’s Intensity has been driven by a particularly nasty strain of virus known asH3N2. This is the fiftieth anniversary of this virus which first emerged in 1968.

Another strain has also begun showing up hitting baby boomers especially hard. Although experts have not figured out exactly why. The number of pediatric deaths is probably more than The 37 reported. The real number may be twice as high officials say.

Two differences with this year ‘s flu season is that it hit almost all states at the same time, and has stayed at that high level nationally for three consecutive weeks.

So what to do? As my previous influenza vaccination discourse had mentioned, if you haven’t been vaccinated, do so now.

It is still not too late. As long as the flu is circulating you lower your risk and severity of the illness. Efficacy this year has only been 32% however this does not change the CDC’s recommendation.

All available flu vaccines are safe in egg allergic patients, according to a new practice Guidelines from allergy experts. Since we are in the midst of a flu epidemic other treatment considerations to consider include Tamiflu also known as Oseltamivir.

If you are an adult and come down with influenza symptoms taking this medication immediately and certainly within the first 48 hours of exposure can decrease the severity of the illness. It is suggested if you are unvaccinated, since it takes two weeks to build immunity to a vaccination, one should consider taking Tamiflu until your immune status improves.

Amantadine which had been used in the past for treatment and prophylaxis for influenza A is not recommended by the CDC due to high levels of amantadine resistance among currently circulating strains.

Zanamivir for adults and children greater than five years old can also be given for seven days after last known exposure. It involves 2, 5 mg inhalations once daily.
For severe Illness, Peramivir IV is also an option.

Patients at risk for flu complications include children under two years of age and those who are 65 years or older, those with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma cardiovascular disease, Renal hepatic hematologic and metabolic diseases such as diabetes, Neuro and neurodevelopmental diseases, HIV pregnant or within two weeks of delivery less than 19 years old on long term aspirin treatment, American Indians, alaskan natives morbid obesity such as BMI greater than 40, nursing home or chronic care facility residents. Although all children under five are considered high risk, A higher risk is for those under two years of age.

Once again here at the legitimate practitioner we will bring you the latest current recommendations so that you can protect yourself and your loved ones.