Health Advisory: Ongoing Elevated Influenza Activity in the United States

The CDC released a health advisory through its Health Alert Network titled “Elevated Influenza Activity: Influenza B/Victoria and A(H1N1)pdm09 Viruses are the Predominant Viruses” on January 10, 2020.

This advisory notifies physicians and other health care practitioners that there is an increase in influenza activity due to influenza B/Victoria viruses, increasing circulation of influenza A(H1N1) pdm09 viruses, and low levels of influenza B/Yamagata and influenza A(H3N2) viruses. Because influenza activity is elevated and both influenza A and B virus infections can cause severe disease and death, this health advisory also serves as a reminder that early treatment with antiviral medications improves outcomes in patients with influenza.

ACOG encourages physicians and other health care practitioners to continue to recommend and administer the influenza vaccine to their patients. Physicians and other health care practitioners should counsel patients, especially pregnant women, about the safety and benefits of influenza immunization for themselves and their fetuses and advocate for the benefits of passive immunity from maternal immunization to newborns. Patients with flu-like illness should be treated with antiviral medications presumptively regardless of vaccination status.

See ACOG’s Committee Opinions Influenza Vaccination During Pregnancy and Assessment and Treatment of Pregnant Women With Suspected or Confirmed Influenza for more information.

United States Influenza Surveillance Report Update

According to the FluView report for week 2, ending January 11, 2020, seasonal influenza activity in the United States remains high. Influenza-like illness caused 4.7% of patient visits reported through the United States Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network. All regions are above their baselines of 2.4% and are continuing to increase.

ACOG’s Influenza Resources

ACOG has informative tools for providers and patients. The resources include the following:

- ACOG Immunization Clinical Guidance
- ACOG Influenza Immunization during Pregnancy Tool Kit
- ACOG Immunization for Women 2019–20 Influenza web page
- ACOG maternal immunization patient education graphics
- ACOG Influenza FAQs for Providers
- FAQ for Patients Concerning Influenza (Flu) Vaccination During Pregnancy

Call for Nominations: 2020 ACOG Immunization Champion Award

Are you or someone you know an Immunization Champion? We are seeking up to three ACOG members to be recognized as ACOG’s 2020 Immunization Champions!

ACOG’s Immunization Champion Award recognizes members who make a significant contribution toward improving immunization rates in their communities, practice, or at the national level through their work in maternal and adult immunization. The winners will receive a $1,500 honorarium and an award to display in their office and will be highlighted in this Immunization Newsletter, which is emailed to all ACOG members. Awardees will also be added to ACOG’s Immunization Champion Honor Roll.

ACOG is accepting nominations until February 28, 2020, and will select and notify the winners by April 1, 2020.

Submit your nomination today!

January Is Cervical Cancer Awareness Month
According to the American Cancer Society, about 13,000 new cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed annually. At one point, cervical cancer was one of the most common causes of cancer-related death in women. However, thanks to the implementation of screening and vaccination recommendations, the cervical cancer death rate dropped significantly. About 90% of cervical cancers are caused by HPV infection, further highlighting the critical importance of HPV screening and vaccination.

The CDC and ACOG recommend HPV vaccination for girls and boys aged 11–12 years old.

Check out ACOG’s resources on cervical cancer and HPV:

- Cervical Cancer Resource Overview
- Cervical Cancer Screening Resource Overview
- Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Resource Overview

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**You Call the Shots: Vaccine Administration Training Course**

Take advantage of You Call the Shots, an interactive, web-based immunization training course from the CDC. This course features a series of modules identifying vaccine-preventable disease and explains the latest guidelines and recommendations for vaccine use. Each course offers continuing education, self-test practice questions, and reference and resource materials.

Visit the CDC’s education and training page for more information.

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