

The GeriJournal



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Flu Review

Influenza is upon us! Activity is picking up in the community and a few institutions have reported outbreaks already.

MOHLTC has begun sending Influenza vaccine to LTC facilities. To this point, Vaxigrip® (staff and residents under 65 years) and Flud® (those 65 years and over) have been provided. After remaining unchanged for two years, two of the three viral components are different this time around. A/Victoria/2011 (H3N2) replaces A/Perth/2009 (H3N2) and B/Wisconsin/2010 replaces B/Brisbane 2008. The H1N1 strain is still represented by A/California/2009.

Please send updated weights and creatinines to assist with the dosing of Tamiflu®, should you be so unfortunate as to need it this year. Creatinine values from the past twelve months are fine, so mass sampling is not required. Unstable residents without a recent creatinine on file would be an exception to this rule.

If an Influenza outbreak is suspected, please contact

GeriatRx immediately (even before you swab your first resident!). We will send a startup supply of Tamiflu®, as well as dosing schedules and labels, so treatment and prophylaxis can begin ASAP.

Within the next week, we will send flu vaccine administration labels to all Directors of Care for your MARs and charts. Don't forget about the annual Flu Shot Challenge. All staff members who roll up a sleeve for a quick poke in the deltoid will have a chance to win \$75 from GeriatRx. Let's aim for 100% compliance this year!

Zostavax at GeriatRx

Zostavax® has been around for a few years now and it has become a popular tool in the prevention of Herpes Zoster (shingles) infection. The complex manufacturing process has led to shortages in the past, but this problem seems to have been resolved, at least for now.

With improved availability, we have decided to stock Zostavax® at GeriatRx. It is the only product on the market that can prevent shingles or reduce its severity. Cost (roughly \$180) can be a barrier to its use, as it is not yet covered by ODB.

Zostavax® is highly temperature sensitive so storage can also be a challenge. It will be packed in ice when delivered, but it must

be placed in the freezer immediately upon receipt. Our driver will alert the staff member receiving Zostavax® to ensure it is whisked to the freezer. The vaccine should be reconstituted and administered within 30 minutes of removal from the freezer.

Save the Date

Our next education event will be held in the evening on November 27th. Dinner will be included and we are fortunate to have Dr. Harpreet Singh Bajaj presenting to us. He works out of the LMC Endocrinology Centre in Brampton and his topic will be *Reducing CV Risk in the Elderly Patient*. The event will take place in east-central Toronto. A detailed invitation will be sent out to all our facilities within the next week.

More Good News on D

Vitamin E, β -Carotene, selenium...they were all stars, until they came crashing down to earth. Vitamin D continues to defy the odds and impress us more and more.

The latest two positive studies appeared in *Neurology* and *Arteriosclerosis*, where meta-analyses linked D deficiency to dementia and MI and CV death, respectively. Health Canada recommends at least 800 IU of D for those 70+, but most need more so an initial serum level is warranted.