

Severe Flu Season Drives Urgency Of Prevention And Treatment

(NAPSA)—With the nation still reeling from the most severe flu season in years, prevention and treatment of the flu virus have taken on a new urgency. While vaccination remains the best way to prevent infection and complications associated with the flu, as many as 40 million people will contract influenza this year. A person infected with the flu can pass on the disease for four to five days, and many people are not aware of prescription antiviral medications that can both prevent and treat influenza.

“Because influenza spreads so rapidly, particularly in a severe flu season like this one, it’s important to identify co-workers and family members who have been in direct contact with an infected person,” said Dr. Donald B. Perlman, MD, director of the Allergy Clinic at Newark Beth Israel Medical Center. “If those contacts are given antiviral medications, such as Tamiflu, following exposure to the virus, it can help prevent the spread of the disease.”

Antiviral medications can also reduce the duration and severity of the flu when started within the first two days of the onset of symptoms. Both a cold and the flu are viral infections that cause similar symptoms such as coughing and sore throat, but the flu is more severe. The onset of flu symptoms is often very sudden and is not confined to the respiratory tract.

What To Do If You Get The Flu

- **See your doctor right away.** If you get to the doctor in the first two days of experiencing flu symptoms, prescription antiviral medications can reduce the duration of influenza. Tamiflu®, the most commonly prescribed antiviral medication, may reduce duration of flu by 30 percent.
- **Stay home and rest, especially if you have a fever.** The influenza virus spreads quickly, so stay home to avoid infecting others. Wash your hands often with soap and warm water for at least 10 to 15 seconds and avoid touching your eyes or nose.
- **Get some temporary relief.** Over-the-counter therapies may temporarily relieve flu symptoms, though they do not treat the virus that causes the flu. Gargle with warm salt water a few times a day to relieve a sore throat. Use throat sprays or lozenges.
- **Stay hydrated.** Drink plenty of fluid—water, fruit juices and clear soups. Avoid alcohol. Use saline (salt water) nose drops.



Common flu symptoms include sudden onset of fever and chills, cough, muscle pain, headache, fatigue and weakness. Some people also get a stuffy nose and sore throat. Flu sufferers should visit their doctor at the onset of symptoms for antiviral medications that can reduce the duration of influenza.

If you want to learn more about the flu and track the flu in the area log on to www.flustar.com.

Tamiflu® is generally well tolerated. In treatment studies for adults, the most frequently reported adverse events were mild-to-moderate transient nausea and vomiting. Other events reported more frequently than with placebo were bronchitis, insomnia and vertigo. In prophylaxis studies in patients aged 13 and older, adverse events were qualitatively similar to those seen in the treatment studies despite a longer duration of dosing.

The most frequently reported adverse events were nausea, vomiting and headache. Other events reported more frequently than with placebo were diarrhea, abdominal pain, dizziness, insomnia, vertigo and fatigue. However, the difference in incidence between Tamiflu® and placebo for these events was less than one percent.

Efficacy of Tamiflu® in the treatment of subjects with chronic cardiac disease and/or respiratory disease has not been established.