

Health Bulletin



What To Do When Seniors Get The Flu

(NAPSA)—Early detection of influenza is especially important for those at high risk, including residents in nursing homes. In fact, approximately 90 percent of the approximately 36,000 people who die from influenza each year in the United States are among the elderly.

Nursing homes as well as long-term care centers are ideal breeding grounds for flu infections, where residents are living in close proximity to each other.

An ongoing three-year study, which started in 2006 and runs until 2008, is being conducted in Australia, where, to date, investigators have noted several key findings. Where facilities used rapid flu tests to actively monitor outbreaks and then appropriately prescribed antivirals versus those facilities that employed routine self-reporting without the use of a rapid diagnostic test for flu, the attack rates of residents for those using a flu test reported a reduction from 42 percent to 21 percent.

In addition, the time between initial flu outbreak and intervention of antivirals was reduced by almost 50 percent and the duration of the outbreaks within the nursing home settings was reduced from an average of 22 days to 11.5 days.

What Does This Mean?

Since seniors are at a higher risk for both getting the flu and dying from complications of the flu, the use of a rapid diagnostic for influenza can help, as evidenced by this study. Dominic Dwyer, M.D., said, "The QuickVue® test for influenza performed by nursing home nurses on-site is sensitive and highly specific and



A test that is conducted right in the doctor's office can now detect the presence of influenza in adults and children.

allows for rapid recognition of outbreaks and [timely] intervention with antiviral therapy."

Once influenza has been confirmed, a physician can prescribe antiviral drugs that may reduce the severity and duration of influenza and help prevent the spread of the virus to others. Antivirals must be taken within 48 hours of the onset of symptoms to be effective in treating the flu.

One test that has gained widespread popularity among physicians is the QuickVue Influenza test; a test conducted right in the doctor's office that can detect the presence of the influenza virus in adults and children.

For more information about influenza or to find a physician in your area offering the QuickVue Influenza test, visit www.flutest.com.