



Patient Newsletter

May 2009



## Swine Flu

Public health officials in the United States, Mexico, and many other countries and international organizations are carefully monitoring an outbreak of Swine Flu that is spreading. It is important to be aware of Swine Flu and keep an eye on the news for updates, but there is no need to panic.



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The reason that swine flu is such a concern is that it is a new type of flu and it is likely that no one has any immunity to it, so it has the potential to become a pandemic (a pandemic is a flu virus that spreads very rapidly around the globe and make millions of people very sick very rapidly).

The symptoms of swine flu are the same as influenza; fever, cough, muscle aches, sore throat, vomiting, and diarrhea. The CDC and Massachusetts Department of Health recommends that anyone with those symptoms who has also, in the past seven days, travelled to areas identified as having people with swine flu be tested for the virus.

If you have questions or think your child meet the above criteria and should be tested please let Dr. McAllister know.

For the most up to date information about swine flu check these websites:

<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/> and <http://www.mass.gov/dph/swineflu>.



## Vaccination Policy

We have updated and published our vaccination policies. While Dr. McAllister firmly believes in the safety and effectiveness of the CDC's recommended vaccine schedule, he also believes that every family should have the right to make medical decisions for themselves. If you are interested in an alternative vaccine schedule for your child, please read our [vaccine policy](#), [vaccine billing policy](#) and [refusal to vaccinate release form](#). At your child's appointment Dr. McAllister will review the policies with you.



## Fun in the Sun

The unusual heat wave last week may have caught you off guard! Keep your family safe this summer by following these tips from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

**Babies under 6 months:**

The two main recommendations from the AAP to prevent sunburn are to avoid sun exposure, and dress infants in lightweight long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and brimmed hats that shade the neck to prevent sunburn. However when adequate clothing and shade are not available, parents can apply a minimal amount of sunscreen with at least 15 SPF (sun protection factor) to small areas, such as the infant's face and the back of the hands. If an infant gets sunburn, apply cold compresses to the affected area.

**For Young Children:**

Apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before going outside, and use sunscreen even on cloudy days. The SPF should be at least 15 and protect against UVA and UVB rays.

**For Older Children:**

The first, and best, line of defense against the sun is covering up. Wear a hat with a three-inch brim or a bill facing forward, sunglasses (look for sunglasses that block 99-100% of ultraviolet rays), and cotton clothing with a tight weave.

Stay in the shade whenever possible, and limit sun exposure during the peak intensity hours - between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or greater. Be sure to apply enough sunscreen - about one ounce per sitting for a young adult. Reapply sunscreen every two hours, or after swimming or sweating.

Use extra caution near water, snow, and sand as they reflect UV rays and may result in sunburn more quickly.

Sincerely,



Dr. Terence McAllister  
Performance Pediatrics

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