



Leading the way

A Newsletter for Providers of Medical Associates Health Plans

December 2007

Flu Mist Update

MedImmune's FluMist® (Influenza Virus Vaccine Live, Intranasal) has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use in children 2 to 5 years of age. The nasal spray was originally approved in 2003 for the prevention of influenza A and B viruses in children and adults from 5 to 49 years of age.

Medical Associates Health Plans will cover FluMist® for the 2007 and 2008 flu season (when recommended by a participating physician or practitioner). This is due to the more competitive pricing of the FluMist®. We will *not* require prior authorization for FluMist®.

Our preference is still the injectable flu vaccine, since it can be utilized for the general population (whereas FluMist® is typically recommended to a subset of healthy children and adults).

Our coverage for FluMist® remains as above, with the age limit lowered to include ages 2 to 49 for the 2007-2008 flu season.

Proper Antibiotic Use: Help Educate Members

We appreciate your efforts to reinforce appropriate prescribing of antibiotics. Educating patients on antibiotic resistance is important any time of the year, but particularly during peak cold and flu season.

The Medical Associates Quality Improvement staff recently sent a mailing to our members, outlining the use of comfort measures for relief of symptoms. If you would like a supply of brochures for use in your practice, feel free to contact the QI Department at 563-556-8070 or 800-747-8900.

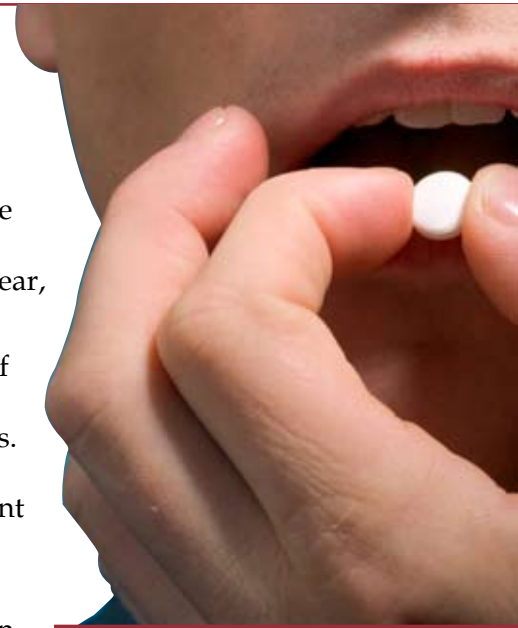
Please take every possible opportunity to explain that an antibiotic is not a remedy for a virus and, in most cases, the body's defenses will overcome the infection with proper care and time.

Encourage these self-care tips:

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink lots of liquids.
- Use a humidifier.
- Use saline nasal spray or drops.
- Gargle with warm salt water to reduce sore throat pain.
- Use acetaminophen or ibuprofen for fever and muscle aches.

Explain to your patients they should call you if these symptoms present:

- pain in teeth or sinuses
- more than moderate ear pain, especially if on one side only
- fever over 101°F
- shaking chills
- coughing up thick yellow-green, gray, or rust-colored phlegm
- any significant headache



My eLink online

Log onto *My eLink*, our convenient and confidential web portal for easy access to health plan information 24/7.

View member benefits, eligibility, claims data, accumulators, download forms, request prior authorizations, and search our drug formulary.

Sign up today by visiting us online at www.mahealthcare.com.

Call us if you have questions, at 563-584-4885 or 866-821-1365.





Member Identification of Paper Claims

To those provider offices who submit paper claims to Medical Associates Health Plans, please be sure that the member I.D. number is always included.

The number, which is located on the member I.D. card, is essential to timely claims processing. It should be displayed on line 1a of the standard HCFA claim form.

In the near future, we will upgrade our automated claims processing system to offer increased efficiency for our providers and members. Paper claims without a member I.D. number cannot be identified by the system, and will be rejected for payment.

Please refer to the sample I.D. card shown, which identifies the actual

number you must use. Our members are instructed to always present their I.D. card when seeking medical care.

However, if the patient does not, please ask them for the card or visit our website to retrieve the information for them, at www.mahealthcare.com (click "provider" tab under My eLink).



You may also call our Member Services staff at 563-584-4885 or 866-821-1365.

Thank you!

Physician & Provider Update

Medical Associates Health Plans welcomes new participating providers! Benefits are based upon individual subscriber contracts. Questions may be directed to our Member Services staff at 563-584-4885 or 1-866-821-1365.

Bouska, Richelle LMHC
Backbone Area Counseling
Manchester, IA

Gerst, Timothy MD
Manchester Family Medical Associates
Manchester, IA

Gross, Judy LISW
Backbone Area Counseling
Manchester, IA

Lombardi, Nathan PA-C
Musculoskeletal Department
Medical Associates West Campus

Pruckler, Dennis ARNP
Backbone Area Counseling
Manchester, IA

Providers sometimes move from the area or retire. No longer participating are:

Dehner, Michael MD
Boscobel, WI

Fichtinger, Ann MA
Platteville, WI

Quick, Brian PA-C
Lancaster Family Medical Center
Lancaster, WI

Ramabadran, R.S. MD
Cardiology Department
Medical Associates East Campus

Scott, Karen MD
Pediatrics Department
Medical Associates East Campus

Townsend, Heidi MD
Family Medicine Department
Medical Associates East Campus

Gill-Mast, Valerie MSW
Platteville, WI

Johnson, Clayton MS
Dubuque, IA

Zithromax Dosing

For the automatic processing of Zithromax prescriptions at the pharmacy level, the following dosing limits apply:

- 250 mg Zithromax: initial dose of 500 mg on day 1 (two 250 mg tablets) followed by 250 mg per day on days 2 through 5.
- 500 mg Zithromax: 500 mg daily for day 1 through 3.

Exceptions to the above include diagnoses of community-acquired pneumonia, pertussis, and severe exacerbation of COPD/chronic bronchitis.

Please indicate these diagnoses on the prescription, so that we can allow the override at the pharmacy level and eliminate the need for additional telephone calls to your office.