

FIGHTING THE FLU

Grane Rx makes managing flu season simple

OCTOBER IS UPON US—AND SO IS THE START OF FLU SEASON

As you know, older adults (and their caregivers) are at greater risk for influenza and related complications. Between now and May, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that nursing homes take a multifaceted approach to prevent the spread of influenza. Of course, the first step is administering flu vaccine to both residents and caregivers. In fact, it's the most effective way to reduce the risk.

There are other ways as well, including implementing respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, managing ill residents appropriately and adhering to infection control precautions for all resident-care activities. Even simple things such as washing your hands properly can make a big difference. Common sense plays a big role as well; for example, if a caregiver is sick, don't come to work.

Our goal is to make managing flu season as simple as possible for you, so we've prepared a handy guide on page 2. Please feel free to make copies and display it prominently in the common areas of your facility. If you have any questions, just let us know.

MANAGING THE FLU AT YOUR FACILITY

If you'd like specific advice on prevention and treatment options for your facility, our pharmacy consultants can work with your Infection Control Committee to develop the best approach for you. This may include, for example, how to treat residents with special conditions, such as kidney or liver disease.

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Jen Devinney, PharmD.
Director of Consulting and Medical Records
Grane Rx

“Flu season can be a stressful time for facilities,” said Jen Devinney, PharmD., Director of Consulting and Medical Records at Grane Rx. “Many reach out to us each year for the latest information and specific recommendations. We do all we can to ease the burden.” This includes helping facilities prepare for and manage not only this year’s flu season, but also next year’s as well. “For example, some nursing homes order vaccine in advance,” she said. “Every flu season, some new challenge appears. That’s why we’re here.”

Is it really the flu— or just a cold?

Many of their symptoms overlap and knowing the difference between the two illnesses is key to determining the proper treatment. So here's a quick guide. If you have any questions, we'll be glad to help.

Symptom

Cold

Flu

| | | |
|--------------|--|---|
| Cough | Mild, dry cough | Common, can progressively worsen |
| Sneezing | Frequent | Occasional |
| Runny nose | Frequent | Occasional |
| Sore throat | Frequent | Occasional |
| Muscle aches | Uncommon, mild if present | Frequent & potentially severe |
| Headache | Very uncommon | Occur suddenly & potentially severe |
| Exhaustion | Very uncommon | Occur suddenly & severe up to 2 weeks |
| Fever | Uncommon in children & adults, can reach 102°F in infants & toddlers | Common, usually above 102°F & can last up to 4 days |

FLU MANAGEMENT GUIDE

Please display in the common areas of your building.

Influenza treatment recommendations:

| Generic Name | Trade name | Dosage | Frequency |
|--|----------------------------|--------|------------------------|
| Oseltamivir | Tamiflu® | 75mg | Twice daily for 5 days |
| Oseltamivir – Renal Patients (creatinine clearance between 30 and 10 mL/minute) | Tamiflu® | 75mg | Once daily for 5 days |
| Zanamivir | Relenza® (two inhalations) | 10mg | Twice daily for 5 days |

Influenza prophylaxis recommendations:

| Generic Name | Trade name | Dosage | Frequency |
|--|----------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|
| Oseltamivir | Tamiflu® | 75mg | Once daily for 10 to 14 days |
| Oseltamivir – Renal Patients (creatinine clearance between 30 and 10 mL/minute) | Tamiflu® | 75mg | Every other day for 10 to 14 days |
| Zanamivir | Relenza® (two inhalations) | 10mg | Once daily for 10 to 14 days |

*For residents with breathing conditions (such as asthma and COPD):
Relenza® is not recommended, because it is an inhalation therapy.*

Flu Shots are the Best Protection

The influenza vaccine is still the #1 recommended protection against the influenza virus. If you have residents or staff members who have not been vaccinated and are not acutely ill, have them vaccinated right away.

4 WAYS TO AVOID SPREADING INFECTION:

1. Wear gloves if you might have hand contact with respiratory secretions or potentially contaminated surfaces.
2. Wear a gown if your clothes might come into contact with a resident's respiratory secretions.
3. Change gloves and gowns after contact with each infected resident.
4. Whether you wear gloves or not, be sure to wash your hands before and after touching each resident, the resident's environment or after touching his/her respiratory secretions. Wearing gloves is not a substitute for proper hand hygiene.

Sick staff members and visitors should stay home until well.

IF A RESIDENT HAS OR IS SUSPECTED TO HAVE THE FLU:

The CDC recommends the following Droplet Precautions:

- Place ill residents in a private room. If one isn't available, place ill or potentially ill residents together.
- Before entering a resident's room, wear a surgical or procedure facemask. Remove and dispose of it after leaving the room.
- If you must move the resident, have him/her wear a facemask, if possible. Let the appropriate staff know that the resident has suspected, probable or confirmed influenza.

FOR CONFIRMED CASES OF THE FLU THAT ARE CONTAINED ON SPECIFIC UNITS OR FLOORS:

1. Generally, it is recommended NOT to treat the entire facility—just the impacted units or floors.
2. Give priority to residents who have not been vaccinated yet over those who have had a vaccination in the past.
3. Staff members who have been exposed to the influenza virus should not be transitioned to a unit that does not have the virus.
4. Consider conducting therapy and activities in resident rooms, until the virus has passed.

ABOUT GRANE RX

Grane Rx is the complete pharmacy solution for 32 long term care communities serving 4,500 residents in Pennsylvania. Known for technological innovation and putting the needs of customers first, Grane Rx simplifies pharmacy services in a changing and challenging healthcare world.

HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW TO MANAGE THIS YEAR'S FLU SEASON?

Contact your Grane Rx representative at **412-449-0504** or visit www.granerx.com for more information.