



Newsletter

Winter 2008-09

Sick season begins.....

Even though we live in Florida where the weather does not change much, we still experience a few months where there are more children sniffing, sneezing, coughing, and running fevers. Here are a few tips to help you treat your sick children during this time of the year.

AAP OPPOSES RETAIL-BASED CLINICS

Most of you have probably seen the minute-clinics in Walmart, CVS, Publix, etc. These are staffed by nurse practitioners who most likely are not specialized in pediatrics. The American Academy of Pediatrics has taken a very firm stance on denouncing them for pediatric patients due the lack of continuity of care for children. In other words, what may be fine for you, may not be ideal for your child. **We do not recommend that you take your child to one of these clinics.** For the same reason, we do not recommend that you go to any of the urgent or "walk-in" clinics. We are your child's doctor, so there is no better place to be seen for continuity of care. Now that we have our Electronic Medical Record system in place, we can access your child's chart from any office to see what is done at each visit.



*We do our part to follow these recommendations by making ourselves available **365 days a year.** We have **late night hours** most nights of the week and are available to see sick children on the weekends. **Please call us first instead of going to these minute clinics or any walk-in clinic or emergency room, unless it is a true emergency!***

IF YOU HAVE TO GO TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM, WE RECOMMEND THAT YOU TAKE YOUR CHILD TO EITHER PALMS WEST OR ST. MARY'S HOSPITALS.

SORE THROAT

Most sore throats are not due to Strep throat. However, there is really no good way for you as the parent to know if it is a sore throat caused by the Streptococcus bacteria that needs antibiotics, or by just a virus. If your child's sore throat lasts for more than a day or two, call us to examine him/her. Ibuprofen or acetaminophen, lozenges plus hot or cold substances will help alleviate the pain.

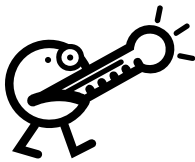
Did you get your child his/her flu shot? If not, call today for an appointment. It's not too late! We have both the shot and the live, intranasal spray. The spray is available for children over 2 years old with no history of wheezing or egg allergy.

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FEVER

We get many calls every day about this topic. The most important things to know are:

- (1) **Fever is your friend!** Pathogens like viruses can not live at high temperatures so this is the body's response in order to fight off the illness. Fever does a better job warding off the virus than antibiotics ever could!
- (2) **Your child's brain is not going to "fry"** from a fever that is in response to illness. Some viruses, such as influenza, can even cause fevers up to 106 F.
- (3) **We treat fever in order to make your child feel more comfortable.** The fever is going to run its course in spite of ibuprofen (Motrin/Advil) or acetaminophen (Tylenol). Giving either Motrin every 6-8 hours or Tylenol every 4-6 hours is appropriate in order to make your child feel better.
- (4) **We do not routinely recommend alternating Motrin and Tylenol.** This can get very confusing and you run the risk of overdosing your child on one or the other, which could cause liver or kidney toxicity. If you are concerned about your child's fever not coming down with the appropriate dose of one of these medications, please call the office. Please go to our website for appropriate dosing based on your child's age.

When to come in:

- (1) Any infant < 3 months of age with a fever of >100.4 F rectally.
- (2) Any child 3 months to 3 years old with a temperature >102.5 F; for over 3 years, any temp >104F
- (3) Any child > 3 months old with a fever for more than 48 hours with no other symptoms.
- (4) Any child with a temperature > 101 F for more than 5 days.
- (5) Any child with a fever, with headache, neck pain and lethargy.

OUR JOB IS TO REASSURE YOU THAT THE FEVER IS DOING WHAT IT IS SUPPOSED TO AND NOT A SIGN OF SOMETHING MORE DANGEROUS. PLEASE CALL US IF YOU ARE CONCERNED AND WE WILL EXAMINE YOUR CHILD.

COUGH

Much like fever, cough is often your child's friend. Most cough in children is secondary to drainage of mucus from behind their nose down the back of their throat. This causes a cough in order to keep the mucus out of the lungs. For this reason, it is better to treat your child with an antihistamine or decongestant to dry up the source of the cough, instead of suppressing the cough.

- **Bronchiolitis** is a common illness this time of the year in young children predominantly caused by a virus called **RSV**. It can cause wheezing and difficulty breathing. If your child ever has these signs, please call for an appointment.
- **Croup** is a virus that attacks the upper airway around where your voice box is, which is why it causes a harsh, "seal-barking" type of cough. Because of the swelling in the airway, it can also cause your child to have difficulty breathing. Stridor is the unusual sound that you may hear when your child is having to work hard to breath. Most children do not have difficulty breathing with croup; however, if you notice these signs, please call us, or go to the Emergency Room.

Provider news

The Changing Face of Palm Beach Pediatrics

We are sorry to announce that Dr. Amy Aqua is no longer working in our Royal Palm office. She resigned from our practice in October since she felt it was time for a change. We are very excited to introduce our new physician, Dr. Dionne Skervin. Dr. Skervin will be working at all the offices initially to become familiar with how each office operates. She just finished her residency at University of South Florida, where she was a chief resident last year. Our other new physician, Dr. Christie Goodwin has now been with us for over four months and has been establishing a great following of patients!

Please ask to meet one of our new doctors at your next visit.

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