

# LDI

Volume 7 | September 2007

# Specialty Drug News

## Influenza-What You Need to Know

The good news is that four antiviral medications have been approved by the FDA for treatment of influenza.

They are amantadine, rimantadine, zanamavir and oseltamivir. The bad news is that in order for these drugs to be effective in shortening the length of time you are sick the medication must begin within 2 days of becoming ill. Getting an appointment with your physician in time could be the real challenge.

*The single best way to protect yourself and others is to get a flu vaccination each year.*

Then there is also the problem of determining which type of flu you have so that the most effective treatment can be prescribed. A number of tests are available to help di-

agnose the flu, such as a nasal or throat swab, but the results can take anywhere from a couple of hours to several days. An article posted on the CDC website (Centers for Disease Control) states that Influenza A virus resistance can happen very rapidly during treatment so the use of amantadine and rimantadine should not be used for treatment or chemoprophylaxis (prevention) in the United States. If your physician recommends either of these medications for Influenza A you can refer him to the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov>.

Prevention of the flu is one of the best ways to fight back. The single best way to protect yourself and others is to get a flu vaccination each year. Two kinds of flu vaccine are available in the United States:

- The “flu shot” – an inactivated vaccine (containing killed virus) that is given with a needle, usually in the arm. The flu shot is approved for use in people older than 6 months, including healthy people and people with chronic medical problems.
- The nasal-spray flu vaccine – a vaccine made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu) sometimes called LAIV for “live attenuated influenza vaccine”). LAIV is approved for use in healthy people 5 years to 49 years of age who are not pregnant.

*Habits for good health include the following steps:*

- Cover your nose and mouth with



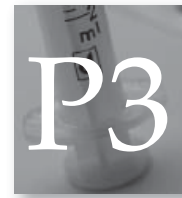
**Influenza-  
What you  
Need to  
Know**



**RSV  
Season is  
Quickly  
Approach-  
ing**



**FDA  
Approves  
New  
Drug for  
Kidney  
Cancer**



**Drug  
List-  
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Disease/  
Condi-  
tion**

## Continued, Influenza-What You Need to Know

a tissue when you cough or sneeze – throw the tissue away after you use it.

- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Make sure to wash thoroughly and for the proper length of time. One rule of thumb is to sing the “Happy Birthday to You” song twice. That length of time provides the best method for killing bacteria. If you are not near water, use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from people.

- If you get the flu, stay home from work, school and social gatherings.

- Keep a supply of individual disinfectant wipes with you so that you can wipe off grocery cart handles, etc. This is especially important for wheelchairs that are used for the general public in department and grocery stores.

October and November is the best time to get vaccinated, but you can still get vaccinated in December and later. Flu season can begin as early as October and last as late as springtime.

For information regarding flu shot clinics or obtaining flu serum please contact **LDI Pharmacy Benefit Services at (314) 652-2121 or (866) 516-2121**. You may want to also visit the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov>. The website features an abundance of influenza information as well as educational flyers that can be downloaded.

Source: Centers for Disease Control

*For more information regarding LDI's Specialty Newsletter, please contact us:*

**local** 314 / 652-2121 x189

**toll free** 800 / 652-9550 x189

**email** vsb@ldipbm.com

## RSV Season is Quickly Approaching

**Respiratory syncytial virus (sin-SISH-shul) (RSV) is more common than one would think. RSV causes mild cold-like symptoms in adults and children. However, in a high-risk infant, RSV can become serious and life-threatening. RSV is the leading cause of hospitalization for children under one year of age. Severe RSV infections may increase the risk of wheezing and asthma-like illnesses through childhood.**

RSV season usually starts in the fall and runs through spring. But, depending upon the region, the season may be different. In some areas of the U.S., RSV season may last all year. Parents should seek advice from their pediatricians to determine when the season occurs in their area.

### ***Babies in the following risk categories may be more likely to develop severe RSV:***

- Premature birth (born more than 4 weeks early, with or without lung disease)
- Being born with certain kinds of lung disease
- Being born with certain kinds of heart problems
- Low birth weight (under 5 ½ pounds)
- Having school-aged brothers and sisters
- Going to daycare
- Family history of asthma
- Exposure to tobacco smoke and other air pollutants
- Multiple births (for example, twins)

Currently, Synagis is the only monoclonal antibody approved by the FDA to prevent this infectious disease. Synagis was approved for use in the United States in 1998 and is now available in 62 countries.

The safety and efficacy of Synagis were established in infants with bronchopulmonary dysplasia, infants with a history of prematurity and children with significant heart disease. The first dose of Synagis should be administered prior to commencement of RSV season with doses being administered monthly throughout the season.

A new study in the Journal of Pediatrics suggests that Synagis may reduce subsequent recurrent wheezing in premature infants. The study showed that premature infants without chronic lung disease who received Synagis prior to the study had a 49 percent reduction in the incidence of recurrent wheezing compared to preterm infants who did not receive Synagis. Wheezing is a whistling sound made by air passing through airways narrowed by inflammation or muscle spasms. Children who wheeze are typically seen by physicians to determine the cause of the wheezing.

According to the World Health Organization, 64 million people are infected with RSV each year and 160,000 will die from this disease. Approximately one-half of all infants are infected with RSV during the first year of life, and nearly all children have been infected at least once by the time they reach their second birthday.

RSV infection usually manifests as a URI with symptoms resembling a cold. In premature infants the infection risk is increased and could progress into a lower respiratory tract infection that could require hospitalization, mechanical ventilation and intensive care. Synagis administration has been shown to reduce hospitalizations by 55 percent.

For more information on RSV season and Synagis fulfillment please contact **LDI Specialty Pharmacy Services at (866) 516-4121** or visit our website at [www.ldipbm.com](http://www.ldipbm.com) to review our Synagis Steps program.

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# FDA Approves New Drug for Kidney Cancer

**A new drug has been approved by Food and Drug Administration to help in the fight against advanced kidney cancer. Temsirolimus (Torisel) which is manufactured by Wyeth provides a new option for physicians.**

The American Cancer Society has estimated that more than 50,000 new cases of renal cell carcinoma will be diagnosed in 2007, and more than 40% of those cases will already be in the advanced stages of the disease.

Torisel may be a first-line treatment for patients that have poor prognosis or metastatic disease.

In the Phase III trial 626 patients with advanced renal cancer were studied. Patients were randomly assigned treatment: alpha interferon only; Torisel; and a combination of both drugs. The results of the trial showed that Torisel significantly improved median overall survival compared to the alpha interferon group. The combination group did not show a significant increase in overall survival compared to the alpha interferon group. Torisel also demonstrated significant benefit in median progression-free survival compared with the alpha interferon group.

Torisel is infused over a 30 to 60 minute period once a week. Some of the side effects observed are rash, nausea, edema and anorexia. While hypersensitivity occurs with alpha interferon as well the side effects with Torisel appear to be fewer.

## Specialty Medication Listing by Disease/Condition

### AIDS/HIV

Daunoxome  
Doxil  
Intron A  
Roferon-A  
Serostim  
Taxol  
Fuzeon

### Alpha 1 - Proteinase Inhibitor Deficiency

Aralast  
Prolastin  
Zemaira

### Antihemophilic Agents

Antihemophilic Factor  
Advate  
Alphanate  
Bioclate  
Helixate FS  
Hemofil M  
Humate P  
Hyate C  
Koate DVI  
Kogenate FS  
Monarc M  
Monoclate P  
Recombinant  
ReFacto

### Anti-nausea

Aloxi  
Anzemet  
Emend  
Kytril  
Zofran

### Asthma

Xolair

### Cancer/Related

Adriamycin  
Adrucil  
Alkeran  
Aredia  
Avastin  
BiCNU  
Blenoxane  
Busulfex  
Campath  
Camptosar  
Cerubidine  
Cosmegen  
Cytarabine  
Cytosan  
Depocyt  
Doxil  
DTIC-Dome  
Eligard  
Ellence  
Erbitux  
Ethyol  
Faslodex  
Fludara  
Gemzar  
Gleevec  
Herceptin  
Hycamtin  
Idamycin  
IFEX  
Intron A  
Leucovorin  
Leukine  
Leustatin  
Lupron Depot  
Lupron Depot-Ped

Mesnex

Mustargen  
Mutamycin  
Mylotarg  
Navelbine  
Nexavar  
Nipent  
Novantrone  
Oncaspar  
Ontak  
Paraplatin  
Platinol AQ  
Proleukin  
Rituxan  
Roferon-A  
Sutent  
Tarceva  
Taxol  
Taxotere  
Temodar  
Thyrogen  
Toposar  
Trelstar Depot  
Trelstar LA  
Trisenox  
VePesid  
Vinblastine  
Vincasar  
Vumon  
Xeloda  
Zanosar  
Zoladex  
Zometa

### Contraceptives

Depo-Provera

### Crohn's Disease

Remicade

### Dystonia

Botox  
Myobloc

### Factor IX Concentrates

Alphanine SD  
Benefix  
Mononine  
Profilnine SD  
Proplex T  
Bebulin VH

### Gaucher's Disease

Ceredase  
Cerezyme  
Zavesca

### Growth Hormone Deficiency

Genotropin  
Humatrope  
Norditropin  
Nutropin  
Nutropin AQ  
Saizen

### Hematologics

Arixtra  
Aranesp  
Epogen  
Fragmin  
Innohep  
Lovenox  
Neulasta  
Neumega  
Neupogen  
Procrit

### Hepatitis C

Copegus  
Infergen  
Intron A  
Pegasys  
Peg-Intron  
Rebetron  
Roferon-A

### Hormone Deficiency

Delatestryl  
Delestrogen  
Depo-Estradiol  
Depo-Testosterone

### Hunter Syndrome

Elaprase

### Primary Immunodeficiency

Carimune NF  
Gamimune N  
Gammagard S/D  
Gammar-P  
Gamunex  
Iveegam EN  
Panglobulin  
Panglobulin NF  
Polygam S/D  
Venoglobulin-S

### Miscellaneous

Alferon-N  
Milrinone  
Zinecard

### Multiple Sclerosis

Avonex  
Betaseron

Copaxone  
Novantrone  
Rebif  
Tysabri

### Osteo/ Rheumatoid/ Psoriatic Arthritis

Enbrel  
Humira  
Hyalgan  
Kineret  
Orencia  
Remicade  
Supartz  
Synvisc

### Osteoporosis

Forteo  
Miacalcin

### Psoriasis

Amevive  
Enbrel  
Raptiva  
Remicade

### Respiratory Syncytial Virus

Synagis

### Rh Hemolytic Disease

BayRho-D  
Micro-Rhogam  
Rhogam  
WinRho-SDF