

Health Updates April 5, 2010

Influenza

The respiratory illness season is starting to wind down for 2009-2010. At this moment, it looks like we will not have a separate seasonal influenza outbreak. Essentially, all the cases of influenza being reported nationwide at this time are of the H1N1 strain, of which we experienced a widespread outbreak in Belgrade in October, 2009. We were expecting the typical seasonal influenza strains would follow that. As of this writing, this appears not to be the case. It is very unusual not to have seen the seasonal influenza virus strains surface, as they typically do on an annual basis.

Looking forward, I think we will have to watch for an early fall outbreak this year and I would encourage everyone to receive their flu vaccination for 2010-2011 as soon as the vaccine is available in September or early October. The CDC expanded the indications such that essentially everyone should be vaccinated, excluding only those under six months of age.

Tick Bites

Spring is also the time of year to be mindful of tick borne diseases. Typically, April and May are when ticks are at their highest activity. If you are out hiking this spring, be sure to check for local redness of infection at the site of any tick bite. Ticks found locally do not carry Lyme disease and therefore, we do not use antibiotics preventatively in an uncomplicated tick bite. However, there are other common tick born diseases found in this area and anyone who develops signs of illness within two weeks of a known tick bite should seek medical attention. This would especially include fever and headaches or unusual rashes.

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