

## Interim Guidance for Influenza Treatment for the 2008-2009 Season.

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We would like to make you aware of the interim guidance for use of antivirals in the treatment of influenza released recently by the CDC for this season.

- Presently, influenza activity is at low level in the US and locally but testing of early influenza season isolates indicates that nationally oseltamivir (Tamiflu) resistant influenza A H1N1 is the most common strain isolated so far.
- The strain is sensitive to zanamivir (Relenza) and rimantadine (Flumadine).
- The other influenza A, type H3N2, and influenza B remain sensitive to oseltamivir; both are resistant to rimantadine.
- We urge you to test patients for influenza in whom you are considering treatment. Tests that can differentiate between influenza A and B are preferred. See below for treatment recommendations. Of note, the sensitivity of rapid influenza tests is 50-70%; therefore if the rapid test is negative but influenza illness is suspected, treatment should be initiated and a viral culture done.
- Zanamivir is presently in short supply but increased production and distribution of the drug is expected soon. Zanamivir is administered through oral inhalation by using a plastic device; it is contraindicated in patients with reactive airway disease, pregnant women, or nursing mothers. It is only approved for treatment in those over 6 years old.

At present, very few cases of influenza have been reported in Monroe County. Of those that are lab confirmed, 75% are Flu A (Labs cannot differentiate between H1N1 and H3N2) and 25% are Flu B. Again we encourage testing to distinguish between A and B to assist in choice of treatment. We will periodically give updates about the circulating strains in our community and any new treatment guidelines.

Of note, annual influenza vaccination is the most important step in preventing influenza. Vaccine, which is well matched this year, is still available from distributors.

**Table 1. Treatment recommendations for influenza during 2008-2009 season**

<b>Rapid antigen or other laboratory test</b>	<b>Preferred medication(s)</b>	<b>Preferred treatment for hospitalized and immunocompromised patients, and patients with reactive airway disease. (combination antiviral treatment)</b>
Unknown	Zanamivir	Oseltamivir + Rimantadine
Positive A	Zanamivir	Oseltamivir + Rimantadine
Positive B	Oseltamivir <u>or</u> Zanamivir	Oseltamivir

For treatment doses please refer to <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/antivirals/dosagetable.htm#table>