
Dakota Diabetes Coalition is proud to offer this column on diabetes and related concerns every other Friday.



Dr. Johnson is a family practice doctor in Grand Forks with a special interest in diabetes -- and a special knack for writing. As a member of the Dakota Diabetes Coalition, he has generously made himself available to answer questions through our listserv. If you have comments, or questions for Dr. Johnson to address in future columns, please contact gailhand@q.com



DAKOTA DIABETES
COALITION

Visit the Coalition's website!

<http://www.ndhealth.gov/diabetescoalition/>

One more shot...

**If you've got diabetes,
get yourself vaccinated!**

As we enter seasonal influenza season, remember the importance of vaccinations for our patients with diabetes. **Persons with diabetes** are generally considered to be a **high risk group for influenza and pneumonia**. According to the Centers for Disease Control, seasonal influenza kills about 36,000 people every year. During this flu season, 2009-2010, Novel H1N1 influenza (swine flu) will also be a factor, and an FDA approved immunization for H1N1 is imminent. Hospitalization rates for H1N1 are lower than seasonal influenza thus far, but patients will need guidance on managing potential community outbreaks that seem increasingly likely.

Both seasonal **influenza and H1N1 have similar symptoms**, characterized by fever (usually <100 degrees F), myalgias, cough, rhinorrhea, malaise, and fatigue. Many patients will not require specific treatment, but if respiratory status becomes compromised, hydration cannot be maintained, or blood glucose cannot be controlled, some of these patients will require hospitalization.

Presently, the North Dakota Department of Health is recommending **H1N1 testing for hospitalized patients**. Persons with diabetes who have any illness need to use their **“sick day” guidelines**, which include **hydration, frequent blood glucose monitoring and a plan for dealing with changes in blood glucose** values. In addition, patients with diabetes need to maintain adequate **“stockpiles” of diabetes supplies and medications**.

Currently, the American Diabetes Association recommends:

- Annually provide an influenza vaccine to all diabetic patients ≥ 6 months of age.
- Administer pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine to all diabetic patients ≥ 2 years of age. A one-time revaccination is recommended for individuals ≥ 64 years of age previously immunized when they were ≤ 65 years of age if the vaccine was administered ≥ 5 years ago.

Other indications for repeat vaccination include nephrotic syndrome, chronic renal disease, and other immunocompromised states, such as after transplantation.

Diabetes Care January 2009 32:S1-S2

Both of these vaccinations are recommended unless contraindications exist such as an allergy to vaccine components or eggs.

Patients should understand that vaccines are safe, and they can't “get sick” from the vaccines. **Vaccination is thought to reduce seasonal influenza infections in persons with diabetes by nearly 80%**. The H1N1 vaccine

will be recommended by the CDC for persons with diabetes, and will be given as an injection separately from seasonal influenza vaccine. Expectations are that H1N1 vaccine will be available sometime this month.

Vaccination against influenza and pneumococcal disease is a safe and cost effective addition to management of patients with diabetes. Here are a couple of good sites to learn more:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has lots of information on seasonal flu and Novel H1N1 flu. Included are articles on people with specific diseases and conditions, including vaccinations for patients on kidney dialysis or those with chronic kidney disease. To see basic questions and answers, including the topics of traveling, safety and adverse events information, and for specific populations of people, see:

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/>

North Dakota Department of Health <http://www.ndhealth.gov/>

To see the latest statistics on flu outbreak in North Dakota by county, as well as information on where people can get flu shots and more, see:

<http://www.ndflu.com/>

Eric L. Johnson, M.D., is a member of the Dakota Diabetes Coalition. He serves as Assistant Medical Director at Altru Diabetes Center and is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Family and Community Medicine at the University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences.



[Diabetes and the Flu, Dr. Johnson's Column #54, Oct. 2, 2009](#)