



# The Wheezing & Sneezing Times



*Academy Allergy, Asthma & Sinus, P.C.*

## Immune Deficiency & IVIG (Intravenous Immunoglobulin)

### New Physician

We are pleased to announce that **Dr. Ermitano** is accepting new patients. Find her bio under the physician tab and call to schedule an appointment with her today!

### Announcements:

#### **Attention Shot Patients**

Effective: December 1, 2007

In compliance with the guidelines of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology we will be requiring **ALL** shot patients to remain in our office for **30 minutes** after an injection.

Thank you for your cooperation!

### What is immune deficiency?

Immune deficiency is a disorder in which part of the body's immune system is missing or does not function properly. There are over 100 types of immune deficiency disorders. The first sign patients usually notice are recurrent or persistent infections. The diagnosis of these immune disorders is made by specialized blood tests.



### What treatment is recommended for immune deficiency?

Patients who have been diagnosed with humoral (inability to make enough antibodies to fight off infection) immune deficiencies may benefit from antibiotic prophylaxis (daily, usually low dose, antibiotic treatment) or from either intravenous or subcutaneous immunoglobulin infusions.

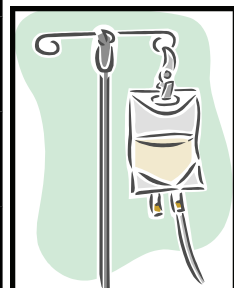
### What is IVig (Intravenous Immunoglobulin)?

The IVig product is made by extracting antibodies (protective elements) from the plasma of multiple blood donors. This is basically a replacement therapy for humoral immune deficient patients.

Currently there are two methods of antibody replacement available. Most commonly immunoglobulin infusions are given intravenously every 3-4 weeks at an infusion center or at a patient's home under the supervision of a specially trained infusion nurse. Second method is via subcutaneous infusions: using a very small needle immunoglobulin is infused under the patient's skin. This is done every week in the patient's home. When properly trained by a nurse, most patients are comfortable doing the infusions by themselves after a couple of weeks.

### What if I don't treat my immune deficiency?

Without treatment immune deficiency patients will likely continue to experience recurrent viral and bacterial infections, fatigue and may even develop chronic lung disease or cancer.



### How can I find out more about immune deficiency and IVIG?

For more information regarding the immunoglobulin infusions, refer to immune deficiency link in the patient education section of our website.

Vicki VanSickle, IVIG coordinator

## Making the Most of Your Doctor Visit

A radiation oncologist, Dr. Marisa Weiss, is making sure patients do just that, “make the most of your doctor visit”. This is described in her book titled “Seven Minutes: How to Get the Most from Your Doctor Visit”. Dr. Weiss explains that although medical information is more accessible than ever, patients still lack the skills to talk to their doctors. They often cram all the questions they have about their health into a brief office visit and often ignore what they don’t understand. Many leave delicate but important issues to the end of an office visit and then run out of time to discuss these issues.

To help patients get answers to their questions and better understand their illness, Dr. Weiss recommends that health care professionals offer aids for their patients.



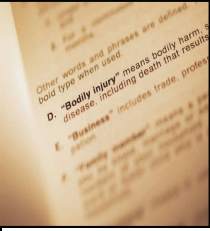
Below is a list of suggestions that we believe will help you to make the most of your doctor visit!

- \* **Write down questions** as you think of them. Keep this list in a convenient location so you can add questions often. Prior to your office visit, list your questions in order of priority.
- \* **Prepare a descriptive list of your symptoms.** Try to remember when your symptoms started and if anything is helpful in relieving these symptoms.
- \* **Bring a list of current medications.** Be sure to note the medications that have changed since your last office visit.
- \* **Make sure your doctor has received any test results or reports from other physicians** before your office visit. Bring **CT films** (not the written report) with you to our office. This will assure that your doctor has had the opportunity to review all crucial data concerning your illness.
- \* **Bring someone with you.** If you are not sure that you can effectively interact with your doctor, bring someone along who can help you and your doctor communicate more effectively.
- \* **Take notes.** Write down important information that you may forget after leaving the office. Ask for handouts or other written material for you to review at home.
- \* **Check out the web links** located in the patient education section of **our website**. These links are there for **your** use. They are categorized according to condition and provide information about the conditions we diagnose and treat. Many treatment options are also explained within the same area of our website.
- \* **Call our office** if you have any questions about your diagnosis or treatment for these conditions.

### Points of Interest:

- ◇ Did you know that a number of our nurses are **asthma educator certified**? Ask your nurse how this provides you with the **best** possible asthma care!
- ◇ Keep an eye on flu activity in Indiana with **FLU WATCH** located on the right side of our website.
- ◇ **PARENTS:** Check out our “Fun Web Sites For Kids” section located under the patient education tab. These are safe sites for kids to visit and learn about asthma and allergies!

## Medical Costs



As medical insurance costs have risen, the popularity of Health Savings Accounts and high deductible insurance policies has increased. Insurance companies are now pushing for doctors to post their fees on-line so patients can compare medical costs and get the most for their medical dollar. This would be a great idea if insurance companies allowed physicians to post the negotiated insurance company reimbursement rate to the doctor, which is your true cost.

The true cost of any medical procedure **isn't what the doctor charges, but what the insurance company pays**. Insurance companies contract with each individual provider and in many cases pay different reimbursement rates for the same procedure. The amount insurance companies pay depends on the physician's ability to negotiate. The amount the patient eventually pays is what their physician has agreed to in a written contract.



The ability to compare medical cost must start with your insurance company. They have already contracted with hospitals, labs, physicians and pharmacies. The amount you pay depends on that negotiated rate.

Catherine Patterson, Front Office Assistant

## Influenza

With winter comes flu season! In the United States, the flu season can range from November to as late as May. Millions of people in the United States will get influenza each year. More than 200,000 have to be admitted to the hospital as a result of influenza and an average of about 36,000 people in the United States die from influenza each year. (CDC-Influenza: The Disease)

Influenza (commonly known as the "flu") is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. Flu viruses spread from person to person through coughing or sneezing. It can also be spread by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching your nose or mouth. Influenza is contagious beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 days after becoming sick. That means you may be able to pass on the flu before you know you are sick! Most people will recover from the flu in a few days to less than 2 weeks. More susceptible people (those age 65 years and older, those that have chronic medical conditions and very young children) will develop life-threatening complications as a result of the flu.

The flu is different from a cold. The flu usually comes on suddenly and with symptoms of:

- Fever
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Dry cough

- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle aches
- Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea

The best medicine for the flu is:

- Rest
- Drinking plenty of liquids
- Avoiding alcohol and tobacco
- Taking medication to relieve the symptoms of the flu.

Influenza is caused by a virus so antibiotics won't help. The best way to prevent the flu is by getting an influenza vaccination **each** year. The flu shot is an inactivated vaccine meaning it is a killed virus. Each vaccine contains three influenza viruses that change each year. **Did you get your flu shot this year?**

Jennifer Mierau, RN, AE-C

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