Health Trends

December 2022

Virginia Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services

Office of Integrated Health
Health Supports Network

Antiviral Medications

What are Antiviral Medications?

Antiviral medications help the body to combat viral infections like the flu, COVID-19, and many other viral illnesses (1).

Common symptoms of the flu and COVID-19 are:

- Fever or feeling feverish/having chills.
- Cough.
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.
- Fatigue (tiredness).
- Sore throat.
- Runny or stuffy nose.
- Muscle pain or body aches.
- Headache.
- Vomiting.
- Diarrhea (more frequent in children with flu but can occur in any age with COVID-19).
- Change in or loss of taste or smell, although this is more frequent with COVID-19 (2).

How can antiviral medications help?

Antiviral medications should be started within the first two days of not feeling well. It's important to see the doctor right away if an individual has symptoms of a virus.

A prescription is required from a primary care physician (PCP) to receive antiviral medications. They cannot be purchased over the counter.

Antiviral medications can:

- Help the body fight-off the virus faster.
- Can lessen symptoms like fever.
- Shorten the length of time someone is ill.
- Lower risk of a secondary infections.
- Reduce the risk of spreading a virus to another person.
- Be used as a preventive treatment.
- Reduce the risk of a hospitalization and/or a fatality (1) (3).

App of the Month

The Sickweather app tracks the cold, flu and 21 other acute symptomatic illnesses within the community. Allowing people to stay one step ahead of the spread of illness, including predictive health forecasts, real-time 'sick zone' mobile notifications, and SickScore™ threat level index for nearby contagious illnesses – great for reminding users to wash hands or get vaccinated. Available for free on both iOS, Android devices (App of the Month is not endorsed by DBHDS Office of Integrated Health. User accepts full responsibility for utilization of app).

Who should take antiviral medications?

Individuals at higher risk of serious complications based on their age or health conditions. However, people with mild illness who are not at higher risk may also be treated early with antiviral medications.

The following are a few common health conditions which increase the risk of complications from a virus:

- Asthma.
- A blood disorder, such as anemias (sickle cell disease).
- People with diabetes mellitus or who are obese.
- Anyone with heart disease or respiratory conditions.
- People with kidney or liver disorders.
- Anyone with weakened immune system, such as those with HIV or AIDS (1).

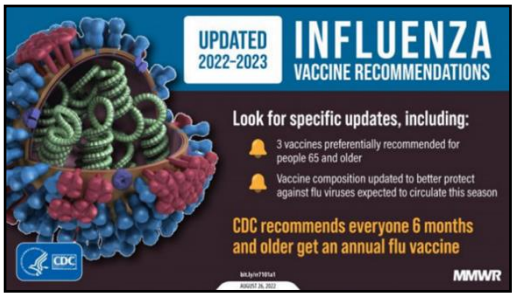
Names of some antiviral medications

There are four FDA-approved antiviral drugs recommended to treat flu this season:

- Tamiflu® (oseltamivir phosphate).
- Relenza® (zanamivir).
- Rapivab® (peramivir).
- Xofluza® (baloxavir marboxil) (1).

There is one FDA approved and two emergency use antiviral drugs used to treat COVID-19:

- Veklury® (remdesivir) FDA approved.
- Paxlovid™ (Ritonavir-boosted nirmatrelvir) emergency use to treat serious COVID-19.
- Lagevrio™ (molnupiravir) emergency use to treat mild-to-moderate COVID-19 (4).



References
1. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2022, September). What you should know about flu antiviral drugs https://www.cdc.gov/flu/treatment/whatyoushould.htm
2. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Disease (NCIRD). (2022, September). Similarities and differences between flu and COVID-19. https://www.cdc.gov/flu/symptoms/flu-vs-covid19.htm
3. Cleveland Clinic, (2021, May) Antivirals https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/drugs/21531-antivirals
4. National Institute of Health (NIH). (2022, November). COVID-19 treatment guidelines: Antiviral therapy. https://www.covid19treatmentguidelines.nih.gov/therapies/antiviral-therapy/

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ABA Snippets …

Introductory Resources on Behavior Analysis

Applied behavior analysis seeks to understand and improve socially significant behavior via the application of evidence-based, behavioral science tactics (1). The larger science of behavior and its many subdisciplines are no strangers to the use of terms and concepts that can be overwhelming and confusing to consumers of the service and aspiring clinicians alike. Additionally, it may be challenging to know where to start and what resources provide reputable information. The current snippet provides vetted introductory resources on behavior analysis, along with suggested interested audience and estimated reading (or viewing) times.

For those that are seeking easily accessible, broad-overview information, try these resources (reading/viewing time less than 30 minutes per resource):

- About Behavior Analysis as presented by the Behavior Analysis Certification Board. Review the short blurb, watch the brief related YouTube videos, and consider exploring the subspecialty areas section.
- Applied Behavior Analysis presented by the Neurobehavioral Unit at Kennedy Krieger Institute.
- Applied Behavior Analysis presented by the Association for Science in Autism Treatment.

For those that have a general understanding of some of the basic underpinnings of the science and would like to begin to dive a bit deeper into concepts and service delivery, the following may be useful (reading time 1-2 hours per resource):

- Identifying Applied Behavior Analysis Interventions white paper presented by the Association for Professional Behavior Analysts
- ABA Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders: Practice Guidelines for Healthcare Funders and Managers (2nd Edition) resource for consumers, regulatory bodies, service providers, etc. Presented by the Council of Autism Service Providers

And lastly, if you are a reader who enjoys journal articles, a great starting point is perhaps the most seminal of all applied behavior analysis publications (reading time 30-45 min):

- Baer, Wolf, and Risley (1968): Some Current Dimensions of Applied Behavior Analysis

Readers, stay tuned for a future update on a web-based curation of behaviorally analytic and therapeutic consultation related resources from the team at DBHDS! You may contact DBHDS to access resources, provide feedback, and learn more about these efforts via the following: nathan.habel@dbhds.virginia.gov

References
1. Cooper, J.O., Heron, T.E., & Heward, W.L. (2020). Applied behavior analysis: Third edition. Pearson Education, Inc.

The New Year is a Great Time to Schedule an Annual Physical or Wellness Exam!

Adult Medicaid members now receive coverage for preventive services as of July 1, 2022. Preventive services are defined as routine health care that includes screenings, check-ups, and patient counseling to prevent illnesses, disease, or other health problems. Preventive services can help people improve their health before something becomes a larger problem.

This new coverage for adult preventive services is a change. Prior to July 1, 2022, adult preventive services were authorized for the Medicaid Expansion population only. Some Medicaid members may have also received preventive services through their managed care health plan as an added benefit. This new coverage provided by DMAS for all adult Medicaid members is a proactive step to help improve the overall health of our members.

Virginia Medicaid
Department of Medical Assistance Services

The following preventive services are now available at no cost to members:

- Adult wellness exam.
- Individual and group smoking cessation and alcohol counseling.
- Recommended vaccines, such as tetanus and diphtheria, shingles, hepatitis A and B, influenza, and human papillomavirus.
- Mammography, prostate, and other cancer screenings.
- Blood pressure and cholesterol screenings.
- Depression screenings.
- Nutritional Counseling.

Medicaid members should contact their primary care doctor to schedule one of these preventive services.

https://www.dmas.virginia.gov/for-members/benefits-and-services/adult-preventive-services/#:~:text=Adult%20Medicaid%20members%20now%20receive,disease%2C%20or%20other%20health%20problems