



Atlanta Children's Clinical Center, P.C.

October 10, 2022

To the patients and families of ACCC:

A much welcome change of weather signaling the arrival of fall! Children are back in school and starting to contract **routine viral illnesses**. We are seeing a few Covid-19 cases, lots of **influenza** and many other viral illnesses right now. After two years of wearing masks, many routine viral illnesses were kept at bay. Now, they are back in full force. Keep washing those hands!

Based on the last two years of mild flu seasons, we anticipate a brisk one this year. Australian data also suggest we may be in for a **busy flu season**. The best way to prevent severe illness from influenza is getting a flu shot. The AAP recommends every child ages 6 months and older receive a flu shot. Those who have a history of asthma or wheezing are at higher risk of doing poorly with influenza, so it is imperative that those children get vaccinated as soon as possible. Many parents have asked if it is “too early” to get a flu shot. We have already seen several **cases of influenza** in the office so now is the perfect time! Vaccinating now will protect your child for the whole flu season. If your child is averse to needles, flumist may be an option. **Flumist** is a live virus flu vaccine that goes in the nose and can be given to healthy children ages 2 and up, but we find that they really need to be about 4 years old to cooperate. We are offering flu shots and flumist to parents as well.

We have also received our new Pfizer **Covid bivalent booster** doses for those ages 12 and up. These vaccines consist of the original strain as well as an update to include the Omicron subvariants BA4 and BA5. If it has been at least 2 months since your child received their previous booster dose, original vaccine or covid disease, they are eligible to receive this new booster dose. We continue to offer Covid vaccines for all children ages 6 mos and older and booster doses those 5 years of age and up. We can do these at their well visits with other routine vaccines or at their flu appointments.

Dr. Chugani and Dr. Ference recently completed a course in **Patient-Centered Mental Health in Pediatric Primary Care** offered by the Reach Institute. The goal is to help us treat our patients with mild to moderate mental health diagnoses using best practices and evidence-based medicine along with pediatric therapists in the community. We have realized for a while now that there are not enough pediatric psychiatrists to treat all the children who need them. The course also dealt with some of the finer points of treating ADHD (which we were already doing.) If you think your child might be struggling with any of these conditions, please reach out to us. We can schedule conferences in person or via telemed and figure out the next best steps forward. Of course, some of our patients will still need the expertise of psychiatry, and we will do our best to help determine what course of action is best for your child and family.

You may have noticed that we have been a bit short staffed around here lately. Two of our medical assistants have gone back to school and/or moved out of state. We are working diligently to hire new staff. In the interim, thank you for your patience as we return your calls and complete your forms.

Drs. Maxey, Chugani, & Ference