

TO: Nursing Facilities, Intermediate Care Facilities/Mental Retardation, State and County Governmental Psychiatric Hospitals, Residential Treatment Centers, and Providers of Pharmaceutical Services

SUBJECT: Drugs for Prophylaxis or Treatment of Influenza Type A Infections

PURPOSE: To inform providers of the licensed drugs for the prophylaxis and treatment of Influenza A infections. This Newsletter serves as a follow-up to the Newsletter, Influenza Update - 1993, Volume 3, No. 50, October 1993. The text below was originally published by the United States Public Health Service (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), October 1, 1993, Vol.42, No., 38, pp. 762-765).

ACTION: "The 1993-94 trivalent influenza vaccine contains virus strains of isolated since March 1993 are closely related to the 1993-94 influenza vaccine."

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"Even though the vaccine and circulating virus strains appear to be closely matched, antiviral agents can still be a useful adjunct to vaccination. RIMANTI-DINE HYDROCHLORIDE, approved for marketing in September by the Food and Drug Administration, and AMANTADINE HYDROCHLORIDE are specifically active against Influenza type A viruses and can be used for prophylaxis or for treatment of Influenza A infections in certain situations, including:

1. As a control measure when influenza outbreaks occur in institutions - both for treatment of ill persons and as prophylaxis for others;
2. As short-term prophylaxis for high-risk persons vaccinated after influenza activity has begun and who need protection for the 2-week period during which immunity is developing;
3. As prophylaxis during peak influenza activity for persons for whom vaccine is contraindicated or for immunocompromised persons who may not produce protective levels of antibody in response to vaccination; and
4. As prophylaxis for unvaccinated health-care workers and household contacts of high-risk persons either during peak influenza activity or until immunity develops after vaccination."

"Because AMANTADINE and RIMANTADINE are effective only against Influenza type A, use of a rapid diagnostic test for Influenza A may assist in determining influenza-control measures."

"Information regarding influenza surveillance is available through CDC Voice Information System (Influenza update), telephone (404) 332-4555, or through the

CDC Information Service on the Public Health Network electronic bulletin board. From October through May, the information is updated at least every other week. In addition, periodic updates about influenza are published in MMWR, and information on local influenza activity is available through county and state health departments."

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