

Newsletter

Winter 2012-2013



Thank you for participating in the WIND Study! Whether you've been a part of the study since last year or just joined recently, we thank you for your involvement. If this is your first newsletter, this is one in a series of newsletters that we send to keep you up to date with our progress and to give you some interesting information about respiratory health and other topics related to the study.

Our Progress

On November 1, 2012, we started enrolling our second group of families from 18 hospitals across the U.S, from Massachusetts to California. So far, we've enrolled more than 350 new participants, bringing the total number of participants to more than 500! We're completing age 6, 12, and 18-month interviews every day, and we've even started doing age 24-month interviews. And we love it when our mailbox is full of your clearance swabs, healthcare swabs, and seasonal swabs—so keep them coming!

In Depth: The Flu

H1N1. H3N2. Influenza. No matter what name it goes by, the flu keeps coming back. What's more, it often brings breathing problems along with it, which can be stressful and scary, especially with a young child. With this year's flu season being particularly harsh, we thought we'd use this "In-Depth" segment to tell you some things you might not know about the influenza virus.

They are several types of flu virus, which is part of why it's so tough to avoid it from year to year. Not only are there three types of influenza—type A, type B, and type C—but each type has different variations, or "strains". Some of these strains affect only humans, but some of the influenza A variations affects all kinds of species, from birds, to pigs, to seals. One subtype of influenza A, H17N10, even affects a small species of bat in Guatemala! Most of the time the strains affect just one species, but sometimes they can

change and mutate, affecting new species that they didn't affect before.

Unfortunately, flu viruses change easily. As a result, the flu vaccine is different each year to match the different strains. Researchers at the World Health Organization (WHO) predict which strains of the influenza virus are the most likely to be the biggest offenders that season—then work begins to create the vaccine that targets those strains. Interesting fact: the WHO actually predicts the strains twice per year to match the winter seasons in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres!

The influenza virus can be spread by touching contaminated surfaces then touching your eyes, nose, or mouth, but it more commonly spreads from person to person through coughing and sneezing. Some signs of the flu are: coughing, sore throat, runny nose, fever. But did you know that people can be contagious even before they start having symptoms?

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Contact Us

If you ever have any questions about the WIND Study, you are welcome to contact us anytime!

855-815-WIND (9463)
windstudy@partners.org
www.windstudy.org

We also welcome your comments and suggestions about future topics for the Newsletter. Thanks!

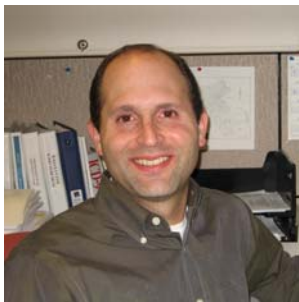
In Depth: The Flu (cont'd)

Babies and young children in particular are very infectious, and can spread the virus to others for a long time. Young children are also more likely to have more severe symptoms, like vomiting and diarrhea. They are also at a higher risk to develop complications from the flu, like pneumonia, bronchitis, or ear infections.

That's why it's especially important during flu season

to take some basic precautions. Washing your hands frequently throughout the day with soap and water—or alcohol-based sanitizer—can help keep the virus at bay. So can covering your mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing.

Be sure to talk to your child's primary care provider if you have any concerns about the flu, and we hope you all stay healthy this winter!



Dr. Mansbach's "son was hospitalized with RSV bronchiolitis at age 4 months..."

Get to Know...Dr. Mansbach

Jonathan Mansbach is a co-investigator of the WIND Study. He is a hospitalist at Boston Children's Hospital (one of the hospitals where families can be enrolled in the WIND Study), which means that he cares for children sick enough to require admission to the hospital. Dr. Mansbach is also passionate about research, and his areas of expertise include respiratory viruses and respiratory illnesses like bronchiolitis.

He lives outside of Boston with his wife,

two children (ages 11 and 7) and their dog. When he is not at the hospital, Dr. Mansbach loves to play soccer in the competitive leagues around Boston!

Dr. Mansbach: "My interest in bronchiolitis began when my son was hospitalized with RSV [respiratory syncytial virus] bronchiolitis at age 4 months. So, I have a personal interest in the WIND study—a study that will help us all understand the strong link between bronchiolitis and asthma."

Food Allergies and Asthma

You may have been wondering why we ask you questions about your child's diet and about food allergies in some of our interviews. (If we haven't talked about these topics with you yet—don't worry, we will get there soon in our follow-up interviews!)

More and more, research suggests that food allergies in early childhood and asthma may somehow be related. While people can be allergic to all sorts of foods, from sunflower seeds to mustard to tomatoes, the majority of food-allergic reactions are caused by just a small group of

foods. It is childhood allergies to some of these foods in particular—eggs, milk, peanuts, and tree nuts—that may play a role in the likelihood of future asthma.

There are still a lot of unanswered questions on the topic, and food allergies are just one part of the puzzle of which children with breathing problems will then go on to develop childhood asthma. This is the very puzzle the WIND Study is trying to piece together—and with your help, we hope to see the bigger picture!

Get in Touch!

Whether it's birthday pictures, quick e-mails, or phone calls, we always love hearing from you! Don't hesitate to drop us a line (windstudy@partners.org) or call us toll-free (855-815-9463) to check in or ask questions, any time. You can also always visit our website at www.windstudy.org for updates, news, and useful information.