

Solutions to Common Issues...

Herd immunity, or community immunity, is when a large part of the population is immune to a specific disease. When enough people are resistant to the bacteria or virus that may cause the disease, it will have nowhere to go. Researchers estimate that 75-80% of the population would need to be vaccinated against COVID-19 before we can have herd immunity.

What we've been doing...

As of early March, we have had roughly 87.5% of our skilled nursing residents vaccinated for COVID-19 and 49.6% of SNF employees for an overall vaccination rate of 64.2%

Our ALF/SLF have reported 89.4% of residents vaccinated for COVID-19 and 54.1% of ALF/SLF employees for an overall vaccination rate of 73.3%

Suggestions/Comments...

We'd love to hear how we are doing and are always open to your feedback to improve our services. Please call 1-800-913-8174 or visit our website greentreepharm.com and click "contact us" to submit the request / comment.



Highlights

- Hot Topics: COVID-19 Vaccine p1
- New Products / Supply Issues p1
- Operations Tips and Tricks p1
- Antimicrobial Stewardship Tips p2
- Regulatory Update / Review p2
- Clinical Focus : COPD p2

News from Our Pharmacy Operations Team

Hot Topics: Covid-19 Vaccine

Johnson & Johnson recently received emergency use authorization for their COVID-19 "vector vaccine". Similarly to the Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna mRNA COVID-19 vaccines, viral vector vaccines give our cells instructions to make the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein...to trigger an immune response. But they do it in different ways. The mRNA COVID-19 vaccines give our cells an mRNA blueprint. Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine delivers instructions using an adenovirus "vector" that's modified and harmless.

New Products / Supply Issues Bamlanivimab aka "BAM"

- ✓ This monoclonal antibody blocks SARS-CoV2 from entering cells and must be used within 10 days of testing positive for residents greater than 65yrs or others at risk for advancing to moderate to severe disease.
- ✓ "BAM" is given as a 700 mg infusion in 100 mL NS w/0.2 micron filter over 30 minutes.
- ✓ Common SEs: nausea, dizziness, headache
- ✓ Monitor for 1 hour after infusion and check vitals every 15 minutes x 4
- ✓ Monitor for chills, hypotension, rash, pruritis, anaphylaxis
- ✓ Residents will need to isolate after BAM
- ✓ Remember...COVID-19 vaccine is not recommended until after 90 days of administration of Bamlanivimab.

Pharmacy Team Spotlight:



Heather began her journey with Green Tree Pharmacy in March of 2010. She was hired into the billing department and is a Certified Pharmacy Technician. Heather's responsibilities

as a billing specialist include new and existing census and face sheet data along with processing prior authorizations and other tasks that help with customer satisfaction. Heather's "Happy to Oblige" attitude is appreciated by all of us at Green Tree Pharmacy and she was recently promoted to Lead Billing Technician... Congrats Heather !!!

Operations Tips and Tricks

To ensure same-day delivery of in-stock med orders, please submit by our cut-off time of 4pm Monday-Friday and noon on Saturday. Your assigned order-entry technician can work with you to do everything possible to complete your order that day if needed.

Upcoming Events

Green Tree Pharmacy is now offering Covid-19 Vaccines to those residents and staff who may need to start or complete their vaccine schedule from the Walgreens/CVS clinics. Please complete the survey link as instructed on the LTC COVID Vac Update that was distributed or click [here](#) to access.

Medication Safety Facts...

The COVID-19 vaccine rollout will put more focus on **giving IM immunizations properly**. Continue to sit or kneel to vaccinate a seated patient...to target the right spot and inject at a 90-degree angle. Keep in mind, injecting too high can result in "shoulder injury related to vaccine administration" (SIRVA)...with damage to tendons, ligaments, or bursae. Hundreds of cases are reported annually.

Focus efforts to give IM vaccines in the central, thickest part of the deltoid. Aim for about 2 inches...or about 2 to 3 finger widths...below the bony part of the shoulder.

Rumor vs. Truth...

Rumor...

Creatinine clearance (CrCl) and Glomerular Filtrate Rate (eGFR) are interchangeable

Truth...

The CrCl is calculated to estimate the GFR. Most renally dosed medications are based off of CrCl. Few medications that are dosed off of eGFR include SGLT2 inhibitors (ex: Farxiga), & Metformin

CrCl and eGFR are not the same thing and prescribers should remain vigilant as to which measurement has been used to formulate dosage adjustment recommendations

Regulatory Update/ Review

More controlled substance Rx's will be sent via electronic prescribing...in an effort to prevent fraud, diversion, abuse, etc. A federal law will require e-prescribing for controlled meds billed to Medicare Part D starting in 2021. CMS will delay imposing penalties for noncompliance until January 1, 2022, to minimize the burden on prescribers.

Clinical Acorns and Guidelines



Clinical News Update

Encourage Healthy Ways to Relieve Stress

April is stress awareness month and here are a few tips to offer some relief...

- Stay up to date on what is going on in the world, but avoid overexposure to the news. Consider apps and other online support options.
- Use reputable sources for information (e.g., national organizations, government resources).
- Stay connected with friends and family. Consider these options when face-to-face visits are not possible: phone calls, video chats, text messages, etc.
- Get plenty of sleep and practice a healthy lifestyle:
 - ✓ eat healthy foods and drink plenty of water
 - ✓ limit alcohol and caffeine intake
 - ✓ avoid tobacco and illegal drugs
 - ✓ exercise regularly (e.g., walking, running, biking, online fitness classes)
 - ✓ Practice relaxation (e.g., reading, listening to music, meditation, mindfulness apps).

Antimicrobial Stewardship Tips Clostridium difficile Infection (CDI)

Symptoms:

- Watery diarrhea
- About 25% of patients will have recurrent CDI

Risk factors:

- Increased age > 65 years
- High risk antibiotics: Clindamycin, fluoroquinolones, ampicillin, amoxicillin, cephalosporins
- Proton pump inhibitors
- Immunosuppression
- Nursing homes, hospital

Prevention:

- Proper hand hygiene: soap and water. **Alcohol based Sanitizers will not kill CDI spores** which can live on surfaces for months. Use contact precautions until 48 hours after diarrhea has resolved.

Treatment:

- 1st line: Vancomycin, Fidaxomicin
- 2nd line: Metronidazole



Clinical Focus: COPD

COPD is characterized by airway inflammation

- Age of onset is > 40 years
- Symptoms are persistent, unlike asthma
- 3rd leading cause of death in US
- Pharmacologic treatment will improve lung function/reduce exacerbations, but will not slow the progression

Vaccinations for COPD patients:

- Pneumococcal, influenza & Tdap reduce respiratory tract infections

Correct inhaler technique:

- **MDIs** (meter dosed inhalers): breath in slowly & deeply while actuating the device; spacers may help with coordination
 - Ex: Proair HFA
- **DPIs** (dry powder inhalers): inhaler deeply & quickly
 - Ex: Advair Diskus, Spiriva Handihaler, etc

GOLD 2021 guideline recommendations:

- Use of short acting bronchodilators on a regular basis is not recommended (proair scheduled)
- LABAs/LAMAs improve lung function/dyspnea & reduce exacerbation rates (etc: spiriva, advair, etc)
- LAMAs (spiriva) demonstrate a reduction in hospitalizations
- Long term oral steroid use increases risk of pneumonia & is not recommended

Your Green Tree consultant pharmacist will focus on residents with COPD and help manage COPD exacerbations & possibly prevent hospitalizations and readmissions.