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NEWS

For Immediate Release

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Don't let bad information leave you with the flu

Nightlight Pediatric Urgent Care stresses vaccinations and proper medical care for all ages

Houston, TX– (September 14, 2010) – Germs aren't the only things that run rampant during flu season – bad information about the flu, the flu vaccine and diagnosis and treatment of the flu also spread like wildfire.

“For physicians it is difficult to stop the spread of the flu virus when members of the general public are making their healthcare decisions based on some pretty common myths,” says Dr. Anastasia Gentles, M.D., F.A.A.P., and a board certified pediatrician, as well as CEO and co-founder of NightLight Pediatric Urgent Care. “It is critical that people learn the truth so they can take charge of their own health, and that of their children.”

The most common myth, according to Dr. Gentles, is that getting the flu vaccine will cause someone to get the flu. That just isn't so. The flu shot contains a weakened virus that is no longer able to cause disease but is able to cause your body to mount an immune response. Because the shot is given during flu season, many people may come down with flu or flu-like symptoms from exposure to the actual virus in the same time period.

Another myth is that if a flu test comes back negative, a person is definitely in the clear. Again, not true. Many of the “rapid” flu tests are not as sensitive as other tests and can miss detection. Dr. Gentles points out that the best way to tell if you have the flu is to visit your doctor. He or she can proffer a diagnosis based on your complex of symptoms. Two other common falsehoods involve medication. First, while many believe that a positive diagnosis requires medication, the fact is that recommendations for treatment of the flu are limited to those who are at highest risk of complications: young children, the elderly, and those with chronic conditions like asthma. Second, many people think if they are given medicine for the flu they will be cured and free of any possible complications. The truth is that the medication used to treat the flu will likely just shorten the course

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of illness by one or two days and if the medication was started too late, it may not work at all. Patients should also keep in mind that these medications often have side effects that may make taking them less beneficial than just letting the flu run its course.

“We have all heard the adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure and that really is true with the flu,” says Dr. Gentles. “Everyone should visit his or her doctor and get the flu shot. Next, equip your purse, backpack, diaper bag, whatever, with hand sanitizers, and teach your children to cough into their elbows, sleeves or down their shirts.”

What if none of that works and you still develop flu-like symptoms? Gentles advises that you call your doctor to determine if you need to be seen. Otherwise, she says, just stay at home, and always keep sick children out of school and any extracurricular activities.

Lean more about treating the flu and other childhood illnesses on Saturday, Sept. 18, and Sunday, Sept. 19, from 12–4 p.m. as NightLight Pediatric Urgent Care celebrates the expansion of its flagship Sugar Land location and the grand opening of its Cy-Fair clinic. A number of family-friendly activities are scheduled to take place, including a carnival. Radio Disney 1590 AM will be at Cy-Fair, Saturday from 2–3 p.m.; and Praise 92.1 FM will be at Sugar Land Sunday from 2–4 p.m.

NightLight is equipped to treat children for all common childhood illnesses as well as many ailments usually treated in the emergency room, including laceration repair and splinting of broken bones. Local pediatricians use NightLight’s services for children seen on a Friday that need next day follow-up and/or sequential medication administration. The use of the latest technology and record management software allows NightLight to provide the primary care physician with notes and reports on the patient after the patient is evaluated and treated.

NightLight’s Sugar Land office is located next to Babies R Us in the First Colony Commons Shopping Center at 15551 Southwest Freeway in Sugar Land. The Cy-Fair Location is at 19708 Northwest Freeway, Suite 500, in the Crossroads Plaza at the southeast corner of US Highway 290 and FM 1960 next door to Staples. Clinic hours of operation are Monday – Friday, 5–11 p.m.; Weekends and Holidays, 12– 7pm. Accepted health plans include United Healthcare PPO and Medicaid, Aetna, BCBS of Texas, Cigna, Kelsey-Seybold, and Texas Children’s Health Plan Medicaid and CHIP.

About NightLight Pediatric Urgent Care: Established in March 2007, NightLight’s mission is to provide quality, affordable, compassionate service for infants, children and adolescents. NightLight exists to be the first-choice provider for pediatric urgent care when the primary pediatrician is not available. NightLight clinics are located in Sugar Land and Houston (Cy-Fair), Texas.

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