



THE MEDICAL AND SURGICAL OBSERVER



THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BLUFF CITY MEDICAL SOCIETY

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Welcome members and friends! The Bluff City Medical Society sends well wishes to our colleagues and friends throughout the Memphis area and across the country. We have closed out the summer, and we are looking forward to the cooler temperatures and enjoying a few outdoor activities.

The Bluff City Medical Society has continued to work hard to fulfill our mission of educating the community and supporting students during this time. We've hosted a Men's Health and COVID-19 update panel discussions. We were fortunate to obtain grant funding to formalize our organizations mentorship program with local medical students, residents, and fellows. BCMS has also created the Post Graduate Section of BCMS to house and support post graduate trainees. We've continued to educate and empower the community around us all while continuing to care for patients during an unprecedented delta variant COVID-19 surge and medical staffing shortages.

We are excited to announce that we will host our 18th Annual Dr. Robert J. Smith Lecture and Scholarship Gala virtually on Friday, December 3, 2021. Our membership was hopeful for an in-person event this year, but as COVID cases continue to rise, we felt it paramount to ensure the safety of our members, residents, students, sponsors, family, and friends. Mark your calendars because this be an awesome occasion! We are excited to welcome our keynote speaker, Dr. Bonnie Simpson Mason, Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) as she discusses considerations to decrease health disparities by improving medical workforce diversity thorough increasing the numbers of students and post graduate trainees in medicine though education and support with a focus on equity.

LaTonya B. Washington, MD, MBA
President
Bluff City Medical Society



OTHER STORIES INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

COVID-19 Delta Variant - P.2

Flu, COVID, and Don't Forget RSV! - P.3

MD Spotlight - P.4

COVID-19 and Pregnancy - P.5

Preparing Teens for College- P.5

Importance of Wearing a Mask- P.6





COVID-19 DELTA VARIANT

The SARS-CoV-2 Delta Variant, a newer strain of COVID-19, first detected in India in late 2020, has become the predominant strain causing disease from COVID-19 in the U.S. Two recent studies from Canada and some other surveillance data from the CDC and their public health partners indicate that the Delta variant is 2x more contagious compared to previous strains. There is also evidence that this particular strain causes more severe illness and the likelihood of being hospitalized was greater than with the original (Alpha) strain.

The greatest risk of transmitting the Delta variant continues to be highest in unvaccinated individuals. Breakthrough infections, including those who are fully vaccinated with symptoms can still transmit the virus. Data has shown that fully vaccinated people with breakthrough infections, are infectious for shorter periods, nonetheless can still spread the virus to other people. Therefore masks and vaccination are essential to reducing the transmission of this virulent variant.

What we know about the COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the U.S. is that they are highly effective against the Delta variant in preventing serious illness, disease and death. Studies are underway to learn more about the effectiveness of the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine, but there is growing evidence that fully vaccinated people with the mRNA vaccines from either Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna are less likely to acquire COVID-19 or transmit it to others. All three vaccines are averaging about a 90% effectiveness rate against the Delta (and other previous strains) variant. Vaccines, wearing masks, attention to hygiene and all forms of prevention strategies available are all essential to stopping the transmission of the Delta variant and ending this epidemic.

(Delta Variant: What We Know About the Science, 2021)

(Science Brief: COVID-19 Vaccines and Vaccination, 2021)

(Coronavirus, 2021)



Mario M. Ray, MD, MBA, FACP, CIME



FLU, COVID..AND DON'T FORGET RSV!



As we get ready for cooler temperatures, doctors always prepare themselves for flu season, which is usually September through April. However, those of us that care for children are also concerned about Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).

What is RSV?

RSV is a respiratory virus that typically impacts infants, toddlers, and young children. The vast majority of kids that contract RSV have very mild, cold-like symptoms. However, in a small number of children, RSV infection can cause more serious issues such as bronchiolitis (inflammation and congestion of the small airways), pneumonia, dehydration, difficulty breathing, and low oxygen levels.

What are some signs that my child may have RSV?

- Fever (temperature of 100.4 or higher)
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Wheezing
- Sneezing

In infants, the only symptoms may be difficulty breathing, decreased activity, or poor feeding.

It can take between 2-8 days from exposure for someone to show symptoms of RSV. Symptoms usually last about 3-7 days, with most kids recovering in 1-2 weeks.

How can I know if my child has RSV?

Testing for RSV is done by a nasal swab at your child's pediatrician's office, urgent care, or emergency department. The test results usually take an hour or less to return.

What is the treatment for RSV?

- Treatment is usually supportive, which means that it's based on symptoms. Treatment includes:
- Fever control. Tylenol (acetaminophen) and if your child is older than 6 months, Motrin (ibuprofen) can keep your child comfortable.
- Hydration. Maintaining fluid status is important to help mobilize secretions and help your child's airway stay clear.
- Using a vaporizer next to your child's bed at night can also help loosen secretions and help your child sleep better at night.

Talk to your child's pediatrician before using over-the-counter cough/cold medications.

Can I get sick with RSV too?

Yes. Just like kids, if an adult contracts RSV, it usually causes mild cold symptoms (cough, runny nose, congestion, sneezing). However, in older adults and people with chronic lung problems (i.e. COPD, emphysema, chronic bronchitis, asthma, etc) it can also cause pneumonia, difficulty breathing, and low oxygen levels.

How can I help my family avoid contracting RSV?

Thankfully, some of the measures that you're already doing to keep you and your family safe during the pandemic can also prevent RSV. Here are some tips:

- Wash your hands often. Use soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces (toys, doorknobs, counters, tables, etc). RSV can stay on surfaces for hours.
- Stay home when you are sick.

Kimberly Brown, MD, MPH, FAAEM
Emergency Physician



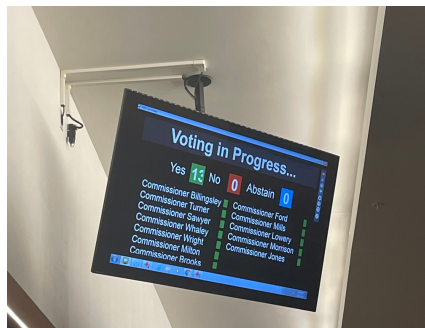
MD SPOTLIGHT



Dr. Michelle Taylor – Shelby County Health Director

Dr. Michelle Taylor, a native Memphian, was confirmed by unanimous vote as the Shelby County Health Director in July 2021. Dr. Taylor obtained her bachelor's degree from Howard University and attended medical school at East Tennessee State University. She completed 2 years of general pediatrics residency at ETSU and completed her final year at University of Tennessee Health Science Center. She also holds a Master of Science in epidemiology, a doctorate in public Health from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and a Master of Public Administration from Harvard University. She was also a Commonwealth Fund Scholar in Minority Health Policy completing the program in 2017.

Dr. Taylor credits much of her success to the strong mentorship of Dr. William Terrell. She spent summers working in his office after college before beginning at ETSU. Dr. Taylor is an active member of the Tennessee Air National Guard. Her professional affiliations include Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, the Links Incorporated, and National Medical Association.



Dr. Taylor has been athletic since childhood. She ran cross country in high school and remains an avid runner. Her favorite hobby is walking with her mom in Shelby Farm Park, something she's done for years including during her treatment for breast cancer.

The Bluff City Medical Society enthusiastically supports Dr. Michelle Taylor in her role as Shelby County Health Director. Her extensive knowledge base and experience will be an asset to the citizens of Shelby County through the COVID pandemic and beyond.

COVID-19 & PREGNANCY

Since the emergence of COVID-19 in late 2019, this disease has directly or indirectly affected every aspect of society here in the United States and worldwide. Personnel in the public health, medical and health policy fields have been working tirelessly to control the spread of disease and find effective preventative and treatment options, especially for vulnerable populations such as pregnant women. In pregnant and recently pregnant women, the most common symptoms are cough, sore throat, body aches, fevers and headache. These symptoms are similar to non-pregnant individuals. Although disease course is usually mild, current research suggest symptomatic pregnant women have increased rates for ICU admission and need for mechanical ventilation and ventilatory support compared to symptomatic non-pregnant women. There is still limited information regarding COVID-19 and pregnancy outcomes.



To date, there has been an increase of preterm births among women affected with COVID-19. However, it is unclear if it is due to early delivery secondary to COVID-19 infection or another indication.

The best method for pregnant women to protect themselves from COVID-19 is the vaccine. There have not been specific recommendations promoting one COVID-19 vaccine manufacturer versus another. Pregnant people have not reported different side effects from non-pregnant people after vaccination with the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines. However, Janssen Biotech (J&J) COVID-19 vaccine was associated with the rare risk of blood clots with low platelets after vaccination for women younger than 50.

If a clinician suspects a pregnant patient has COVID-19, it is best to advise the individual to be tested and then self-quarantine. Pregnant women who test positive for COVID-19 should self-quarantine for at least 10 days after symptoms first appeared AND at least 24 hours after last fever (without using fever-reducing medication), AND symptoms have improved. The patient should also alert their prenatal provider so that s/he may initiate additional prenatal care as needed.

Brenda Hardy MD and Victoria Lyons, MD

PREPARING TEENS FOR COLLEGE

As parents prepare to send their recent high school graduates off to college, they need to make sure their teens are able to effectively manage their own health care. Once a teen reaches the age of 18 years old, they are legally able to make their own medical decisions. In preparation for assuming this important responsibility, teens need to be able to perform some very basic and important healthcare management tasks. Teens fully responsible for their own health care should have a thorough understanding of their complete medical history. They should know how to manage any chronic medical conditions such as asthma or diabetes and be aware of any food, medication, or environmental allergies. They should also be familiar with their family medical history and their health insurance policies. Teens also need to know the names and dosages of any medication that they take on a daily basis, and they should be able to remember to take those medications without reminders from their parents. They also need to know how to refill medications in a timely manner. Being able to schedule doctors appointments and knowing how to effectively communicate with their physicians are also important tasks all teens need to know how to perform in order to manage their own healthcare needs before they leave for college.

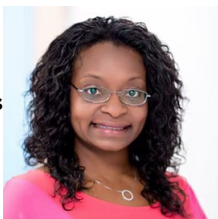
Parents also need to make sure their high school graduates are up-to-date on vaccines prior to arriving on their college campuses. Colleges and universities have their own vaccine requirements for entry; therefore, parents and teens need to make sure they are familiar with those requirements. Required and recommended vaccines include:

- Tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis vaccine (Tdap)
- Meningococcal vaccines – Meningococcal A and Meningococcal B
- Human papillomavirus vaccine (HPV)
- Coronavirus vaccine

Some students may also need booster shots for MMR, polio, hepatitis A, hepatitis B, and varicella (chicken pox) prior to college entry..

In order to prepare for college life, teens need to be able to confidently manage their own healthcare. With the proper preparation and the support of their families, teens will undoubtedly have all the tools needed to navigate through this next phase of life.

Jara Best Jones, MD
Lebonheur Pediatrics



IMPORTANCE OF WEARING A MASK

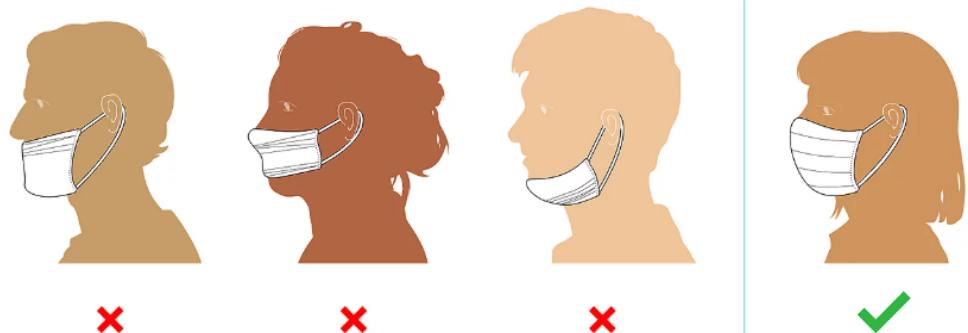
Eva J. Ingram, MD
Internal Medicine



Let's be honest, we all hate wearing a face mask. It blocks our stylish creativity, suffocates us, and may irritate the skin. To make matters worse, we forget to wear it as we walk into a store, requiring us to return to our vehicle and retrieve it. So, in summary, the mask is a nuisance; however, this nuisance is a necessary tool in the prevention of COVID-19 transmission. Many people are unaware that they are carriers of COVID-19. It is spread via droplets, which originate from the mouth, either by coughing, sneezing, talking, singing, or shouting. It is contracted by inhaling these droplets through the nose or mouth, so both should be covered to prevent the spread of COVID. Inappropriately wearing the mask does not guarantee protection against the virus, even if you are vaccinated. Examples of incorrectly wearing the mask include:

DOs AND DON'Ts OF WEARING A MASK

- resting below the chin
- covering only the mouth
- hanging from the ear



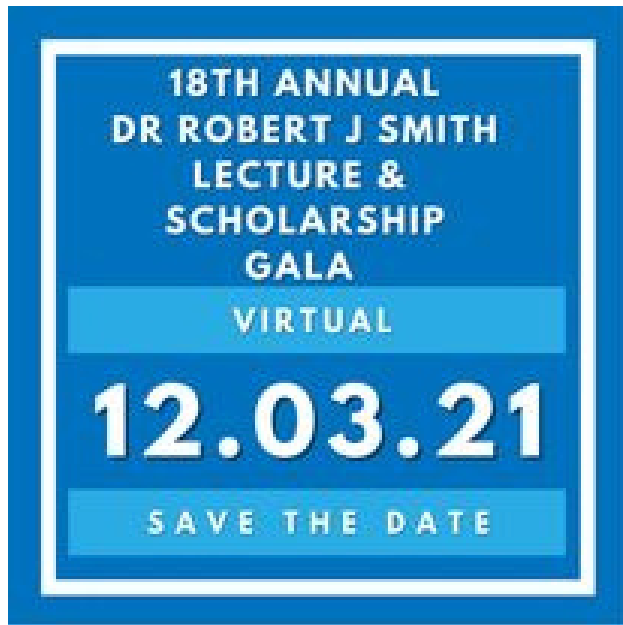
In each case, the protection against COVID is minimal, and you have a high chance of getting infected.

Let's create a checklist to ensure appropriate mask use:

1. Place each loop behind each ear.
2. Adjust the sides of the mask, so that the chin and nose are completely covered.
3. Pinch the nose to prevent air from leaking. If you wear glasses, let them sit above the nose of the mask.
4. Avoid constantly touching your mask during the day.

Now, you are ready to tackle COVID-19! Be sure to wear your mask, even if you feel well. Wear your mask indoors at all times and in close proximity to others. Not everyone has received the vaccine, so it is your responsibility as a fellow American to protect your family, friends, neighbors, unfamiliar faces, and most importantly, yourself.





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