

Important Recorded Messages For YOU!

MAY, 1997

"IF ONLY..."

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IMPORTANT NOTICE TO OUR PATIENTS

The goals of your community Family Physicians within Markham, Stouffville and Unionville are to meet the healthcare needs of its community and patients while continuing to deliver top quality healthcare service. We would like to take this opportunity to inform you that there are services we provide to you which are not covered by OHIP, and have therefore been previously provided on a complimentary basis. Examples of these services include telephone advice, return to work/school notes, telephone prescription renewals etc. Also not covered by OHIP are services requested by third parties such as insurance companies, physical examinations for Ministry of Transportation licenses, etc.

As a result, the Family Physicians of Markham, Stouffville and Unionville, will uniformly begin billing for uninsured services as of May 1, 1997.

You will have the option to pay for these services via an individual or family block fee on an annual basis, covering the majority of uninsured services, or you can pay for each individual service as it occurs. Exemptions may apply in special financial circumstances. Costs for each service will follow the current Ontario Medical Association guidelines for uninsured services. Examples include:

Telephone Prescription renewals.....	\$10.00
Telephone advice.....	\$10.00 and up
Return to work/school notes.....	\$10.00
Block fee - Individual.....	\$50.00/yr
Block fee - family.....	\$120.00/yr

Information regarding these costs are available to you through our offices or by speaking directly to your physician and their office staff.

We regret any inconvenience this may cause and assure you our ongoing commitment to continue to provide top quality healthcare.

Sincerely,
Family Physicians of Markham, Stouffville, Unionville

New asthma treatment breakthrough first in decade

Asthma is a common chronic lung condition that affects many Canadian adults and children. It is caused by inflammation of the lung's airways or bronchial tubes. The tubes become blocked because of swelling and mucus that is

caused by the inflammation and breathing becomes difficult.

How is asthma diagnosed?
Asthma is usually diagnosed by a family doctor who will take a detailed medical history, including a symptom review, such as episodic breathlessness, wheezing, chest tightness and coughing.

The doctor will then perform a lung function test. These tests are simple and pain-free and children more than five- or six-years-old are usually able to do them well.

The simplest type of lung function test is the peak flow rate which can be measured in the doctor's office by a device called a peak flow meter. The patient breathes in deeply then blows out as hard and as fast as possible into a small hand-held device. The meter measures the maximum speed that the exhaled breath is forced out of the lungs.

On average, 10 young Canadians die each week because of their asthma. Physicians believe that the majority of these deaths could be prevented with proper management.

Additional lung function tests may sometimes be required. Because asthma is often linked to allergies, an allergy test can be used

to diagnose the disease. A chest x-ray may also be taken to ensure that nothing other than asthma is causing the wheezing and coughing.

Asthma Prevention

Asthma symptoms are usually triggered by something that bothers the lungs. Triggers range from cold viruses, to allergies and even exercise.

Try to avoid the triggers that cause attacks, such as dust, feathers, animal fur or dander. Smoking will make asthma worse and breathing second-hand smoke may cause an asthma attack. Finding ways to avoid triggers will help reduce the number of attacks.

Treatment

There are two main types of asthma treatment - bronchodilators and anti-inflammatories. Bronchodilators help relieve asthma attacks after they have started. Anti-inflammatories - which must be taken regularly because they control the underlying cause of the disease - keep the bronchial tubes open and help prevent asthma attacks from starting.

Asthma medications can make you feel better and control your asthma.

But there are some side effects. Bronchodilators can cause a rapid heartbeat, loss of appetite, insomnia, while anti-inflammatories can cause a sore throat, loss of voice or skin bruising.

New breakthrough

Leukotriene receptor antagonists, a new class of medication under development, are the first asthma treatment breakthrough in a decade.

An extremely well tolerated and effective alternative to today's standard therapies, the treatment will significantly improve the quality of life for Canadian asthma patients.

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Physicians believe that the majority of these deaths could be prevented with proper management.