



Respiratory Alert Tool Tracks Infections

(NAPS)—Respiratory tract infections, or RTIs, affect millions each year, often threatening lost work days or daily activities and sometimes posing serious health issues. This season, you can be prepared to protect yourself from the spread of RTIs with the help of a new tracking program called the *Respiratory Tract Infection Alert* or RTIalert. The RTIalert is the first national tracking system available to the public to measure and predict peaks for common RTIs:

The RTIalert, sponsored by Bayer Corporation, tracks the outbreak of RTIs, predicting the likelihood and projected severity of outbreaks for 72 cities nationwide. Consumers can learn about outbreaks of RTIs like bronchitis, sinusitis, ear infections and pneumonia in their area by calling toll free 1-866-RTI-INFO (1-866-784-4636) or logging on to www.RTIalert.com.

Symptoms of respiratory tract infections often mimic those of the common cold or flu, causing confusion over whether or not consumers should see a physician for diagnosis and treatment. Early diagnosis is one of the most effective ways to curb RTIs; by providing you with information, the RTIalert increases your awareness of where and when RTI outbreaks are occurring so that you can prepare.

Three Common Adult RTIs

What to Look for:

Chronic Bronchitis

Bronchitis is an inflammation of the lining of the major breathing tubes (called bronchial tubes or bronchi) that connect the windpipe (or trachea) to the lungs. Chronic bronchitis is a condition in which the patient has symptoms including cough, excessive phlegm (or mucus) production, and/or shortness of breath for three months of the year for at least two consecutive years. Chronic bronchitis is often neglected by sufferers who mistakenly believe exacerbations, or flare-ups, are remnants of a win-



ter cold. A smoker with such flare-ups may dismiss them as “smoker’s cough.”

Sinusitis

Sinusitis is an inflammatory disease of the sinus. One of the most commonly reported diseases in the United States, it affects an estimated 35 million people and accounts for more than 11.5 million visits to the doctor each year. Symptoms of acute bacterial sinusitis may initially appear to be residual of a cold or an allergy attack but become more severe and last for a period of time. They include: excessive production of thick, sticky, yellow green mucus, or mucus that develops a bad odor or taste; severe pressure and pain in the face and forehead; coughing, and nasal congestion lasting more than 10 to 14 days.

Community Acquired Pneumonia

CAP, the most common form of pneumonia, is an acute infection of the lung tissue occurring in a person who has not been hospitalized for at least 14 days before symptoms occur (hence “community acquired”). The symptoms of CAP include coughing with or without phlegm production, chest pain, shortness of breath, chills, shaking and/or fever.

The RTIalert

For more information about the RTI incidence in your area and to receive a free brochure on treating and preventing RTIs, call the RTIalert toll free at 1-866-RTI-INFO (1-866-784-4636) or visit www.RTIalert.com.

The information provided by the RTIalert should not take the place of a consultation with your doctor.