MIDDLETON PEDIATRICS

Highlights from our *Caring Well* podcast featuring Dr. Alejandro Jordan
Pediatric Infectious Disease: What Families Should Know

🦠 Influenza (Flu)
- Flu complications are rising—especially among unvaccinated children.
- Common complications include bacterial pneumonia, myocarditis, and hospitalization.
- The flu vaccine doesn't guarantee you won't get the flu, but it reduces the risk of severe illness and hospitalization.
- Misconceptions: You can't "catch" the flu from the vaccine—it's inactivated or weakened.
- New flu vaccines and nasal spray options will soon make protection easier and more accessible.

🦠 RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus)
- RSV hospitalizations are currently lower, but it remains a major concern for infants and preemies.
- New protection options include:
  - Maternal RSV vaccine (during pregnancy)
  - Monoclonal antibody shot for infants (not technically a vaccine but provides passive immunity for 5–6 months)
- Low uptake of RSV prevention remains a challenge.

💉 Vaccine Education & Efficacy
- Flu & COVID vaccines aim to reduce complications, not eliminate illness completely.
- Some vaccines (like MMR or polio) offer >95% protection. Others (like flu) vary due to mutating viruses and prediction-based development.
- Vaccine-preventable diseases are returning, like measles and pertussis, due to declining immunization rates.
- Herd immunity is lost when vaccination rates drop.

🦠 Norovirus & Other Seasonal Viruses
- Handwashing is critical—alcohol-based sanitizers don't kill norovirus.
- Mycoplasma ("walking pneumonia") and invasive strep cases are declining after a recent surge.

💡 What Can Parents Do?
- Get vaccinated annually — flu, RSV (if eligible), COVID, and all routine vaccines.
- Practice good respiratory hygiene: handwashing, covering coughs, avoiding gatherings when sick.
- Don't push for antibiotics — ask about alternatives or shorter treatments.
- Cook food thoroughly—especially shellfish during winter months.
- Support trusted medical sources and verify information before sharing.