

H1N1 and seasonal flu by Julie Tromblee, RN, infection control

No doubt you've heard a tremendous amount of information about the 2009 flu season. It seems that information is everywhere – the evening news, the newspaper, the radio, the school nurse, even coming from your friends and neighbors.

I've assembled some information about H1N1, seasonal flu and flu shots in order to arm our community with the basic facts.

Seasonal influenza (the flu) circulates throughout our nation every year. It is basically the same virus, which changes (or mutates) every year, making it just a little bit different from one year to the next. In 2009, flu outbreaks seem to be happening earlier than usual, which is causing some concern.

H1N1 (or "swine flu") is simply a different variety of flu virus, which appears to be new. Because it's new its causing some concern, but it is important to remember that it is still "just the flu" ... causing exactly the same symptoms as the regular, old flu.

Having said that, flu can be dangerous, especially to those with underlying conditions such as diabetes, women who are pregnant (due to a weaker-than-normal immune system), and others with a chronic condition.

There have been outbreaks in the southern part of the country but reports indicate that, so far, the flu cases seem to be somewhat mild. The primary concern is that if the virus changes and becomes stronger, it may affect people more severely. One important way to help your body fight the virus is by getting a flu shot.

Flu shots (and any shot, for that matter) work by introducing a controlled amount of virus into a person's body. This stimulates the person's body to produce antibodies. If the person later becomes exposed to the same virus, the antibodies will already be in place, ready to fight.

See flu, next page



Julie Tromblee, RN, prepares to vaccinate Matt Nolan, director of facilities, with the seasonal flu vaccine. ECH staff is headed toward the 100% vaccination rate. Staff vaccinations for H1N1 have also begun at ECH.

Flu basics

If you or your family members get the flu, there are a few things you should do.

- Call your doctor to let him or her know.
- Try to keep the sick person away from other family members.
- Rest and drink plenty of fluids.
- Use fever-reducing medication—Tylenol or Advil.
- Stay home from work or school.

Remember: Frequent hand washing is the #1 way to stop the spread of the flu virus.

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Flu, con't.

The safety of the seasonal flu shot and the H1N1 are often questioned. Each year, the seasonal flu vaccine is altered a bit, because the virus mutates. The FDA does not require tests on these minor changes in the vaccine.

Because it is new, tests were conducted on the H1N1 vaccine to determine the adequate dose. Also, because H1N1 spread around the world, we received information from other countries. For example, we know that when the first 39,000 Chinese citizens received the vaccine, only four had side effects - muscle cramps and headaches.

Some doctors have said that the H1N1 vaccine is better tested than the seasonal flu vaccine.

Flu symptoms:

- Fever, sore throat, chills
- Body aches
- Loss of appetite

Flu vs. a cold: someone with a cold usually does not have a fever.

Visit the emergency room:

- if breathing becomes difficult
- not drinking enough fluids
- chest pain / dizziness
- rash
- not waking easily / not interacting / confusion
- bluish skin color (in children)
- if your intuition tells you "something's not right"

Infants under 3 months should not have a fever above 100.4 – call your pediatrician for advice

40-YEAR MILESTONE



Hospital to begin MRI

ECH is pleased to announce that it will soon be offering MRIs .

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) is a noninvasive medical test that uses a powerful magnetic field, radio frequency pulses and a computer to produce detailed pictures of organs, soft tissues, bone and virtually all other internal body structures.

MRI allows physicians to evaluate various parts of the body and certain diseases that may not be assessed adequately with other imaging methods such as x-ray, ultrasound or CT scan.

Molly Thompson, director of the radiology department, says that the mobile MRI unit will be stationed at the hospital one day a week, beginning this winter.

Rod Boula, administrator and CEO, says that this is yet another way ECH is helping its community by increasing the number of services available at the hospital. "It is so important to be responsive to our community; and we're pleased to be able to do just that", he said. "Living in this area, it's necessary to be able to receive care, testing and treatment close to home."



Photograph above: Ellie Roberts, Cecile Lawlor and Meredith King are preparing the area used for chemotherapy and hematology treatment.

Photograph left: Karen Crowningshield can boast that she's been a hospital employee longer than just about anyone else. (Dr. Moisan is also in the "over 40" category.)

Karen began her nursing career in January, 1969 when the hospital building was brand-new. (It was built in 1967-68.) ECH had approximately 25 staff members when Karen started.

40 years ... now, that's loyalty ... to the hospital and to the nursing profession. Congratulations, Karen!

And, thank you.

Chemotherapy at ECH

Cecile Lawlor, a nurse practitioner and oncology certified nurse, has joined Elizabethtown Community Hospital. Cecile brings experience in hematology and oncology services along with particular expertise in chemotherapy treatment to the position.

She is responsible for planning and development of the hospital's newly-implemented chemotherapy program.

The centerpiece of the program is ECH's telemedicine capability. The hospital utilizes a high-definition television unit, along with a high-definition camera. ECH has equipped Oncologist Jan Duus in Plattsburgh with the same camera and monitor, allowing Dr. Duus and Cecile the ability to communicate and see what's happening in real-time.

From his office in Plattsburgh, Dr. Duus uses a remote control device that controls the camera stationed at ECH, where the patient is sitting. This way, he can examine the patient's veins, skin and throat for problems. Since the images are high definition, it's as clear as being in the same room.

The chemotherapy and hematology program will allow patients to receive chemotherapy treatment as well as treatment for other blood-related disorders.

This is important for our community members who will no longer have to travel for treatment; as well as summer residents who need to continue treatment while on vacation.

"I feel privileged to be given this opportunity; to get this important program up-and-running and to help patients with their treatment", Cecile said. "This hospital is very progressive and very forward-thinking. A heavy burden will be lifted when patients learn that they can receive their treatment close to home."



Cecile Lawlor, RN, NP

... ok, there's just one more thing to do

The hospital renovation is complete. The ER has been expanded, radiology enlarged, specialty clinic rooms updated, the lab has been expanded, boardrooms built, and the lobby looks fantastic. The hospital is greatly improved. There's just one more thing ...

The nurses' station, located in the hospital's inpatient unit, will be getting a makeover.

Although it was not in the original renovation plan, through the generous support of the community and due to the fact that the overall renovation came in slightly under budget (when was the last time you heard THAT?), the nurses' station will be receiving a much-needed upgrade.

The existing nurses' station is cramped and inefficient. It's last update was roughly 10 years ago—which may not seem like a long time however, considering that it is used by the entire nursing staff, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, upgrades need to happen frequently. "We're really excited to get this project underway", stated Victoria Savage, nurse manager of the inpatient unit. "Ensuring that the administrative part of our job is more efficient and organized will be beneficial to both our patients and staff."

Matt Nolan, director of facilities, described the renovation. "The nursing desk will be slightly enlarged to make much better use of the space. There will be places for filing, and the flooring will be replaced." The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of November.

Elizabethtown Community Hospital is a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital and not-for-profit, charitable organization located in Elizabethtown, New York. Services include a 24-hour emergency department, acute, sub-acute and long-term inpatient care, physical therapy, laboratory, specialty clinics, and radiology services. It houses a VA Clinic and kidney dialysis unit and operates health centers in Elizabethtown, Westport and Wilmington.

For comments, suggestions, or questions about this newsletter, please contact:

Visit us on the web at

www.ech.org

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New director of community relations

Jane Hooper has been appointed to the position of director of community relations at ECH.

“This is an exciting time to join the hospital”, she said. “The hospital has added many services, along with state-of-the-art equipment in recent years; I’m thrilled to be able to share this information with our local community.”

Jane comes to the hospital with an extensive background in marketing and public relations. Originally from Elizabethtown, she attended Brock University in Ontario, Canada. Her marketing career began at Karo Design in Toronto where she was involved with developing corporate identity and graphic standards programs for some of the largest companies in Canada including Canadian Pacific Hotels (now Fairmont), Mercedes-Benz, the Liquor Control Board of Ontario and Labatt.

She later worked at Pigeon Branding & Design, one of the country’s preeminent branding and packaging design agencies, developing branding and integrated marketing initiatives for organizations such as Molson, Kraft, Pillsbury and Tim Horton’s.

Upon returning to the area in 2001, Jane served as the public relations director at the public relations division of AdWorkshop in Lake Placid. She was responsible for developing public relations efforts for organizations including the Adirondack Regional Tourism Council, The Adirondack Museum, Saranac Brewery, and Kinney Drugs.



Dr. Rob DeMuro smiles as he receives his H1N1 vaccine from Julie Tromblee. “Didn’t hurt a bit”, he joked.



Ali Bridge used the nasal form of the H1N1 vaccine. The state has mandated H1N1 for healthcare workers.

Year-end, charitable giving

Many charities begin to make a plea for donations at the end of each year. There are many, many worthy causes that deserve our time, attention and financial support.

Elizabethtown Community Hospital is here to serve our local community. The hospital provides many important services to our friends and neighbors—emergency care 24 hours a day; chemotherapy and dialysis treatment so that patients don’t have to travel; the opportunity to meet with specialists close to home; mammograms; physical therapy and; acute nursing care, to name just a few.

Please keep Elizabethtown Community Hospital in mind when deciding which local causes to support.

Your donation is tax deductible; and greatly appreciated.



Yes! I want to contribute to ECH

Enclosed is my gift of:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 Other \$ _____

Thank you for your support!

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