

GET WELL & Stay Well

A Publication of the UMMC Patient Resource Center

Fall 2004

Welcome to Fall

Fall is here, and with it, come shorter days, cooler weather, and back-to-school activities. Fall is also host to a variety of important health topics, which we feature in this issue of *GET WELL & Stay Well*.

Fall and winter typically mean cold and flu season. Find out about these common illnesses and the importance of flu vaccines in our feature article, *Fall and Winter Viruses—What Can We Do?*. Fall is a busy time for children which includes lots of holiday events and activities. You will find two valuable articles on the hazards for Halloween and the winter holiday season with tips for keeping your children safe this time of year.

October is also National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and we are featuring an article, *Breast Health*, in this issue on early screening detection and its importance for all women over 20 years of age. Other articles include *Lasik Vision Correction* and *New Book for Children of Living Kidney Donors*.

The Patient Resource Center has completed its first six months of operations with well over 1,700 people using its services. We continue to look for new ways to meet the community's needs through education, health screenings, and information. This quarter, we are planning our first Wellness Fair in December to add to our programming.

Please look at our course schedule and read our informative articles, and learn how to better care for yourself and others. Our vision is to help people—GET WELL and Stay Well.

Stay Healthy,
Anne D. Williams, RN, MS
Editor

Please direct editorial inquiries to: Anne D. Williams, RN, MS, at awilliams@umm.edu

Fall and Winter Viruses—What Can We Do?

Elizabeth P. Fuss, RN, MS, CIC

Winter is sometimes called the “cold and flu season” and appropriately so. These illnesses are caused by a variety of viruses, particularly respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) and influenza A and B.

RESPIRATORY SYNCYTIAL VIRUS

RSV causes upper and lower respiratory tract infections in people of all ages. For many adults, it amounts to nothing more than a “bad cold,” but for others it can lead to serious respiratory illnesses. Infants and children under one year of age are particularly at risk of more serious infection, as are the elderly and anyone with heart or lung disease and weakened immune systems. Unlike some viruses, one episode does not assure immunity, and repeated infections can occur throughout life.

RSV is spread from person to person during coughing and sneezing or through contact with contaminated surfaces which can harbor the virus for hours. A typical scenario is that an individual spreads the organism from contaminated surfaces to their hands and then to their eyes, nose or mouth, resulting in symptoms 4 to 6 days later.

Treatment usually includes only supportive measures such as fluids and oxygen, if needed. The key to controlling RSV is prevention, particularly through good hand hygiene in the home and in healthcare settings. Other measures include proper disposal of tissues and cleaning and disinfection of toys and surfaces.

INFLUENZA

Influenza, or flu, is another potentially serious, highly contagious, viral respiratory illness that occurs primarily in winter months. People with flu typically exhibit sudden onset of one or more of the following symptoms—fever, chills, body aches, sore throat, cough or congestion, weakness and malaise. Flu can lead to pneumonia and then can become deadly, causing 20,000 deaths in the U.S. in a typical year. Rates of infection are highest among children, but serious illness and death are most likely to occur among those over 65 years of age and those with chronic medical conditions such as heart, lung or kidney disease, diabetes or asthma.



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HOLIDAY SAFETY

Take Safety to the Street this Halloween

Karen Hardingham, RN, BSN

Halloween is one of the most thrilling nights of the year for children and also one of the most dangerous. As kids hit the street to trick-or-treat, the potential for unintentional injury rises. In fact, children are four times more likely to be hit by a car on Halloween than any other night of the year. Halloween can indeed be scary, with increases in pedestrian injuries, burns, and falls among children. SAFE KIDS Baltimore offers some tips to keep the holiday fun and free from injuries.

PEDESTRIAN INJURIES

Darting out into the street is one of the most common causes of pedestrian death among children. As children scurry from house to house collecting treats, it is important for them to take the following precautions:

Visibility

- Decorate costumes, bags and sacks with reflective tape and stickers.
- Use costumes that are light or bright enough to make children more visible at night.

Traffic

- Teach children to walk, not run, while trick-or-treating.
- Remind children to stop at all street corners before crossing. Tell them to cross streets only at intersections and crosswalks.
- Teach them to look left, right and left again, before crossing the street, and to continue looking both ways as they cross.
- Teach them to never dart out into a street or cross between parked cars.
- Never let children under age 12 go trick-or-treating or cross the street without adult supervision.

Motorists

- Slow down in residential neighborhoods.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Watch for children walking in the street or on medians and curbs.
- Enter and exit driveways and alleyways slowly and carefully.
- Teach children to exit and enter the car on the curbside, away from traffic.

For kids ages 12 and under:

- Adults should accompany children under age 12 on their trick-or-treat rounds.

For kids ages 12 and older:

- Make sure your children have change for a phone call or a cell phone in case they have a problem away from home.
- Instruct children to travel only in familiar areas and along a pre-established route.
- Instruct children never to enter a home or an apartment building unless accompanied by an adult.
- Set a time for children to return home.
- Restrict trick-or-treating visits to homes with porch or outside lights illuminated.

- Tell children to bring their treats home before eating them. Parents should check treats to ensure that items have not been tampered with and are safely sealed.

All ages:

- Remove breakable items or obstacles such as tools, ladders, and children's toys from your steps, lawn, and porch. Keep jack-o'-lanterns lit with candles away from landings or door-steps where costumes might brush against the flame.

FALLS

On Halloween night, cumbersome costumes and blinding masks can make walking safely through dark neighborhoods difficult. The following tips can help prevent fall-related injuries:

- Apply face paint or cosmetics directly to the face. It is safer than a loose-fitting mask that can obstruct a child's vision. If a mask is worn, be certain it fits securely. Cut the eyeholes large enough for full vision.
- Give trick-or-treaters flashlights.
- Make costumes short enough to avoid tripping.
- Secure hats so they will not slip over children's eyes.
- Dress children in shoes that fit. Adult shoes are not safe for trick-or-treaters. The larger size makes it easier for them to trip and fall.
- Allow children to carry only flexible knives, swords or other props. Anything they carry could injure them if they fall.
- Teach children not to cut across yards. Lawn ornaments and clotheslines are "hidden hazards" in the dark. Tell your children to stay on the sidewalk at all times.

BURNS

- Look for "flame resistant" labels on costumes, masks, beards and wigs.
- Use fire resistant material when making costumes.
- Avoid costumes made of flimsy material and outfits with big, baggy sleeves or billowing skirts. These are more likely to come in contact with an exposed flame, such as a candle, than tighter fitting costumes.
- Keep candles, pumpkins with candles, matches and lighters out of children's reach.

For more information about Halloween safety or other childhood injury prevention topics, please contact SAFE KIDS Baltimore at 410-328-7532. You can also reach Karen Hardingham, Coalition Coordinator, at khardingham@umm.edu.



HOLIDAY SAFETY

Decorate with Care for “The Most Wonderful Time of the Year”

Karen Hardingham, RN, BSN

Parents will spend countless dollars and hours decorating their homes for the holidays. Whether it's candles for Hanukkah, kinaras for Kwanzaa, or ornaments for the Christmas tree, many parents know no limits when it comes to filling their home with the holiday spirit. What they may fail to realize is that their work is not over. From the candles to Christmas trees, creating a festive, safe atmosphere will be the most important preparation of all. SAFE KIDS Baltimore recommends the following tips to keep your holiday season safe:

LIGHTS AND CANDLES

- Decorate your tree using only UL (Underwriters' Lab Inc.) approved lights and cords. Inspect lights for exposed or frayed wires, loose connections or broken sockets. Do not overload extension cords. Use no more than three strings of lights on one extension cord, and never run an electrical cord under a carpet. Be sure to secure electrical cords so that children cannot pull them, and topple the tree.
- Turn off the tree lights when you go to bed, depart from home or leave the tree in an unattended room.
- Keep burning candles out of children's reach; keep matches and lighters out of sight and locked away. Do not leave candles unattended.
- Teach children not to touch burning candles.
- Do not place candles near draperies or anything that might easily catch fire. If you build a fire, use a fireplace screen, and do not leave young children alone in the room. Make sure you put out fires and candles when you go to bed or leave the home.
- Install smoke alarms in your home on every level and in every sleeping area. Test alarms once a month and replace the batteries at least once a year. Home fires and home fire-related deaths are more likely to occur during the cold-weather months.
- Plan and practice several fire escape routes from each room of your home, and identify an outside meeting place. Teach your children to “get out & stay out” in the event of a fire.

CHRISTMAS TREES

- Look for a fresh tree, if you choose to buy a natural tree. Fresh trees are less likely to catch fire than older trees. (A safer option is to buy a fire-resistant artificial tree.)
- Keep your tree in a container full of water, and check it daily.
- Use a wide-based stand to make sure the tree is secure and will not fall over.
- Cover the tree basin with a tree skirt or blanket.
- Keep the tree away from heat sources such as fireplaces, radiators, and heating vents.
- Decorate your tree with children in mind. Do not put ornaments that are breakable, have small detachable parts or metal hooks or look like food or candy on the lower branches where small children can reach them. Also, make sure tree lights are hung out of reach of young children.
- Never burn Christmas tree branches, treated wood or wrapping paper in your fireplace.
- Dispose of your tree promptly after the holidays.

HOLIDAY FOODS AND ORNAMENTS

Some foods and objects pose a choking hazard to young children, especially children under age 6. To help prevent unintentional choking during the holidays:

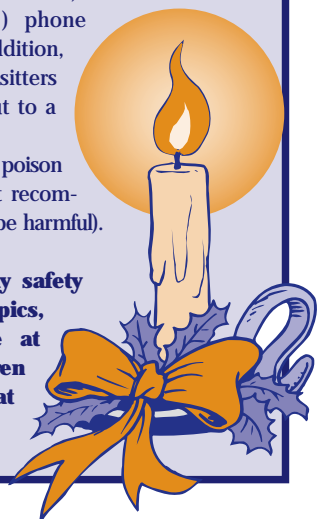
- Keep round, hard foods and candies such as candy cane pieces, mints, nuts and popcorn out of reach of young children.
- Keep small ornaments, tinsel, small figurines and other decorations away from children's reach. Young children have a tendency to put everything in their mouths.

POISONS

While preparing your home for the holidays, be aware of seemingly innocent and unexpected forms of poisons.

- Open the flue in your fireplace when burning wood to provide adequate ventilation. The risk of carbon monoxide poisoning increases dramatically in the winter. Proper ventilation of fuel-burning appliances reduces this risk. Check these appliances annually and before use in cold-weather months. Install UL-approved carbon monoxide detectors in your home.
- Keep alcoholic drinks and containers out of reach. Holiday beverages such as eggnog, laced with alcohol, may be sweet and inviting to young children. Do not leave alcoholic drinks unattended. They could be harmful if consumed by children.
- Keep common baking ingredients such as vanilla and almond extracts out of reach. They contain high levels of alcohol, and may be harmful to young children.
- Beware of fire salts used in fireplaces to produce colored flames. They contain heavy metals, and cause intense gastrointestinal irritation or vomiting if eaten.
- Keep poisonous plants out of reach. Watch for holly and mistletoe berries that fall on the ground, because they are very poisonous if eaten. Other poisonous holiday plants include amaryllis, azalea, boxwood, Christmas rose, Crown of Thorns, English ivy and Jerusalem cherry. Contrary to popular belief, poinsettias are not poisonous, but they can cause skin irritation and gastrointestinal distress.
- Avoid using artificial snow sprays to decorate. These sprays can cause lung irritation if inhaled.
- List poison control center (1-800-222-1222) and emergency medical service (911) phone numbers by all telephones. In addition, leave a phone number for babysitters so they can reach you if you go out to a holiday party.
- Use ipecac syrup only on the advice of a poison control center or a physician (it is not recommended for many ingestions, and can be harmful).

For more information about holiday safety or other childhood injury prevention topics, please contact SAFE KIDS Baltimore at 410-328-7532. You can also reach Karen Hardingham, Coalition Coordinator, at khardingham@umm.edu.



FALL AND WINTER VIRUSES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Influenza viruses are spread rapidly from person to person through the coughing and sneezing of infected persons. Adults and children are generally considered to be infectious from the day before their symptoms begin until about five days afterwards.

Influenza vaccination is the primary method for preventing flu. The ideal months for vaccination are mid-October through early December. Persons at risk for getting a serious case of flu or complications, or people in close contact with them should get the vaccine. These include:

- Persons 50 and older.
- Anyone whose immune system is weakened because of HIV/AIDS, long-term steroid therapy or cancer therapy.
- Residents of long term care facilities.
- People of any age with long-term medical conditions, such as heart, lung or kidney disease, diabetes or asthma.
- Women who will be past the third month of pregnancy during the flu season.
- Anyone 6 months to 18 years of age on long-term aspirin treatment (could develop Reye Syndrome if they catch flu).
- Nurses, physicians, other personnel, family members, or anyone else coming in close contact with people at risk of serious influenza.

Families of patients who are at high risk for influenza should be referred to their physician or to the local health department for vaccination.

Friends and family members who are sick should be restricted from visiting patients.

Inactivated influenza vaccine, given by injection into the arm, is safe and effective for use in all age groups and does not cause flu since it is a killed virus. The vaccine is about 80% effective in preventing flu. If flu does occur despite vaccination, symptoms will be less severe. The most frequent side effect of vaccination is soreness at the vaccination site. Vaccine is not recommended for the following persons: those who have a serious allergic reaction to eggs or to a previous dose of influenza vaccine, those with a history of

Guillain-Barre Syndrome, persons sensitive to thimerosal and persons with fever or active respiratory illness or infection at the time of vaccination.

A new vaccine that is given into the nose, officially known as live, attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV), is only appropriate for healthy children and adults from 5 to 49 years old. It should not be given to healthcare workers, ill persons, or anyone who has contact with ill persons.

“Some antiviral drugs can be used for helping to control and treat influenza, but they are not a substitute for vaccination.”

Some antiviral drugs can be used for helping to control and treat influenza, but they are not a substitute for vaccination. When administered within two days of onset of illness to otherwise healthy adults, amantadine and rimantadine can reduce the duration of uncomplicated influenza A illness, and zanamivir (Relenza) and oseltamivir (Tamiflu) can reduce the duration of uncomplicated influenza A and B illness by one day.

Additional information can be obtained from any of the following web sites or contact your local health department or family doctor.

Links to other influenza sites

1. The National Immunization Program
<http://www.cdc.gov/nip>
2. Influenza Branch, National Center for Infectious Diseases
<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod>
3. The World Health Organization
<http://www.who.org>

Breast Health

Breast cancer affects one out of every eight women in their lifetimes. You may know someone who has had breast cancer. With early detection, women with breast cancer can live long lives after their diagnosis. The key is early detection, and since October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, it is important to learn how to detect breast cancer early.

The following guidelines are taken from the US Department of Health and Human Services and the American Cancer Society.

- Beginning at age 20, examine your own breasts monthly.
- If you see or find a lump, see your doctor right away.
- If you are 40 or over, have a mammogram every one to two years.
- If you have a family history of breast cancer, talk with your doctor about a mammography screening schedule best for you.
- Remind your mother, aunts, sisters, friends, and co-workers to do the same!

Call 1-800-4-CANCER for the US Department of Health and Human Services or 1-800-ACS-2345 or www.cancer.org for the American Cancer Society for more information.



Laser Vision Correction

Allan Rutzen, MD, FACS

Co-Director, University Laser Vision Center

There have been many advances in laser vision correction surgery (LASIK) in recent years. These advances make vision correction surgery available to patients with all kinds of focusing errors—nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism.

At the University Laser Vision Center, state-of-the-art methods for vision correction are available. WaveScan technology can be used to

determine each person's unique imperfections in vision. This information can be used by the ophthalmologist to reshape the cornea, the front surface of the eye, and improve focusing with more precision than ever before.

The success rates for LASIK surgery are very high, but not everyone is a good candidate. You may be eligible if you are at least 21 years old, have a stable eyeglass prescription, are not pregnant, and do not have other serious eye conditions. A thorough evaluation with an experienced eye surgeon is the only way to know for sure if LASIK surgery is right for you.

Even with all the technological advances in the field of laser eye surgery, it's most important to find a skilled eye surgeon who will guide you through the preoperative evaluation, surgery, and postoperative period.

LOOK FOR AN EYE SURGEON WHO:

- is fellowship-trained
- is highly experienced
- teaches other doctors to perform LASIK
- is someone you trust.

The University Laser Vision Center offers no-cost screening appointments so that you can meet the surgeons (Drs. Allan Rutzen or Ramzi Hemady) and have your questions answered. Call 410-328-7069 for more information or to schedule an appointment.



Look Good, Feel Better

The first new session of Look Good, Feel Better will be held for all cancer patients on Monday, November 8 at 2pm pm in the UMMC Patient Resource Center. This program, sponsored in part by the American Cancer Society, is designed to lift the spirits of women undergoing cancer treatments to show them new ways to enhance their looks with make-up and wigs or head scarves. In past sessions, women have been delighted to spend two hours with a cosmetologist who demonstrates the make-up and other beauty techniques. Participants are sent home with a full box of quality make-up products. Please join us for this free program. You must pre-register in advance by calling Beth Wintermute at 410-328-3595.



New Book Published for Children of Living Kidney Donors

Ivy Sheffler-Oidick, LCSW-C

Perhaps it was the story about the donor whose daughter was being taunted by classmates telling her daughter that the mother was going to die when she donated her kidney to her brother. Maybe it was the story about the donor's nephew crying after everyone had exchanged holiday gifts and none of the boxes contained his mother's new kidney, even though he knew his aunt was supposed to give her one. There have been many such tales that led to my decision to write a book so that children could understand what it means for someone to be a living kidney donor for a loved one. The book, entitled *The Greatest Gift*, was written to be both educational and comforting. The book describes the reason for donation, the surgery, what the child may experience, and what the child can do for themselves and others.

A strength of the book is the illustrations. Last spring, Susan Laugen, art teacher at The Nation Academy Foundation High School, Baltimore City Public School #421 was approached. Susan was asked if she and her students would be willing to work on an

art project that would be used to help other children and their families. The students were very excited about the opportunity, and wanted to learn more about kidney donation. As the author, I met with them several times to talk about kidney donation and the goals of the book. The art students used their creativity and imaginations to bring the text to life. Their pictures are colorful, bright, instructive, and sometimes even funny. Susan and her students worked for several months on the illustrations. It was a labor of love because they were asked often to draw pictures repeatedly to get them "just right."

The book was published last month with the support of the UMMS Marketing Department's Alexandra Bessent. Copies are now being given to kidney donors, when they have children who want to know more about their parent's surgery. For a copy, Ivy can be contacted at 328-2996 or at ioidick@smail.umaryland.edu. There will be a book signing Tuesday, October 12, 10 am–noon in the UMMC Patient Resource Center.

October/November/December 2004 Calendar

To register for classes (except for Stork's Nest), please contact the Patient Resource Center at 410-328-WELL (9355). All sessions are FREE unless noted.

Check out our new classes this quarter: Yoga, Prenatal Exercise, and Smoking Cessation.

Classes

Stork's Nest—Prenatal Education

October 1, 8, 15, 22, 29

November 5, 12, 19, 26

December 3, 10, 17

All classes run from 10:30-12:30 every Friday. Please contact Stork's Nest at 410-328-2944 for info and registration.

Prenatal Exercise

Starting September 13-November 15

Ongoing Mondays and Wednesdays 5:00–6:00 pm

A gentle, motion and strengthening class with relaxation for women of all activity levels from 1 week to 9 months.

Cost: \$ 50.00 for 2 months or \$5.00 per class.

\$25 Reimbursement for Benefit-Eligible Employees.

Jazzercise®

→ NEW DAYS

Mondays 4:35–5:15 and 5:15–5:45 pm

Wednesdays 5:00–6:00 pm

Ongoing. Cost: 8 week pass \$85.00 OR walk-ins \$8 per class.

\$25 Reimbursement for Benefit-Eligible Employees.

Yoga (Prana)

Sept 13 – November 15

Mondays 6:00–7:00 pm

10 weeks. Cost: \$10 for employees weekly or \$100 for

10 weeks. \$12 for public weekly or \$120 for 10 weeks.

\$15 for walk-ins (participants must be registered).

\$25 Reimbursement for Benefit-Eligible Employees.

Smoking Cessation – American Lung Association's Freedom from Smoking®

November 2 - December 21

Tuesdays 12 noon–1:00 pm

8 weeks. Don't have to quit the first day!

Cost: \$75 (includes ALA educational packet).

\$25 Reimbursement for Benefit-Eligible Employees.

KICK the Habit & Secondhand Smoke Drop-In Sessions

October 25, November 29, & December 20

12 noon–1:00 pm

Free. UMMC Patient Resource Center

CPR for Family and Friends

November 18 1:00–4:00 pm

Cost: \$25.00

Relieving Cancer Pain

October 13 5:00–7:00 pm

Free. UMMC Patient Resource Center

Support Groups

Medicare and Transplantation:

How and When It Can Help You

Transplant Education Series—Support Group

October 19 5:00–6:30 pm

UMMC Patient Resource Center

Support Groups (continued)

Infection, Rejection, and Biopsies

Transplant Education Series—Support Group

November 16 5:00–6:30 pm

UMMC Patient Resource Center

Healthy Eating for the Holidays

Transplant Education Series—Support Group

December 21 5:00–6:30 pm

UMMC Patient Resource Center

Leukemia and Lymphoma Support Group

4th Tuesdays each month 3:30 pm

Free to all adults/families with Leukemia, Hodgkins or non-Hodgkins Lymphoma, or Myeloma.

Call Tracy Orwig at 410-825-2500 or Beth Wintermute

at 410-328-3595 to register or for info.

UMMC Patient Resource Center

Lunch-time Series

Laser Vision Correction

November 17, December 7

12 noon–1:00 pm

Drs. Allan Rutzen and Ramzi Hemady

Free. Light refreshments, but must register.

UMMC Patient Resource Center

Stroke

October 27 12 noon

12 noon–1:00 pm

Dr. Vasana Cheanvechai

Free. Blood pressure screening from 1:00-2:00 pm.

Light refreshments, but must register.

UMMC Patient Resource Center

Events

Look Good, Feel Better—American Cancer Society and University of Maryland Medical Center

November 8 2:00 pm

Free to female cancer survivors. Call Beth Wintermute at 410-328-3595 to register or for more information.

UMMC Patient Resource Center

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk

American Cancer Society

Sunday, Oct 24 9:00 am

Patterson Park, Baltimore

Blood Drive

December 16 from 7:00 am–7:00 pm

UMMC Patient Resource Center

Wellness Fair

December 8 All Day Event

Free. UMMC Patient Resource Center