



Keep Your Guard Up

Flu season is not over yet

By PAULA VESS
Regional Marketing Group

SHELBY - It may have faded from the headlines, but the flu – both seasonal and H1N1 - is still around. Even though the trend shows that flu cases are decreasing, don't let your guard down yet. Doctors are unable to predict just how long any flu season will last.

"I believe that there has been a decrease in flu cases in our community in particular," said Elias Ashame, MD, an infectious disease specialist affiliated with Cleveland County HealthCare System. "There might be a slight chance that we see another spike. Because many people were vaccinated and we don't have any evidence so far that the virus has mutated, it is more likely that the downward trend will continue even though it has been unpredictable so far."

Despite the decrease in cases, Cleveland County HealthCare System is keeping visitor restrictions in place at Kings Mountain Hospital and Cleveland Regional, where anyone under age 18 and those with flu-like symptoms have been asked not to enter the hospital unless getting treatment. These guidelines have been in place since October.

Dr. Ashame says the decision of local hospitals to restrict visitation during the flu season may have helped limit the spread of the virus. "I think the actions taken by the local hospitals have helped in keeping the outbreak from being more serious," he said.



Flu Symptoms

- FEVER (OFTEN HIGH)**
- HEADACHE**
- TIREDDNESS**
- COUGH**
- SORE THROAT**
- MUSCLE ACHES**

Stomach symptoms such as vomiting may occur but are more common in children than adults.

Each year in the United States, an average of up to 20 percent of the population gets the seasonal flu, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and about 200,000 people end up in the hospital because of complications. In addition, this year the new virus labeled H1N1 started showing up and cases were reported before the

seasonal flu usually starts. About 47 million people are estimated to have been infected with H1N1 and almost 10,000 deaths were attributed to the virus.

With the flu season lasting well into March, it makes sense to keep your defenses up and take care of yourself. Other than a flu shot, two of the most effective ways to prevent the flu is to cover your cough and wash your hands often.

Cold and flu viruses are spread mainly when you inhale droplets released when someone coughs or sneezes. But, germs are also spread when you touch a surface that has viruses on it and then touch your nose or mouth. According to the CDC, it is possible for adults to infect someone one day before symptoms develop and up to seven days after becoming sick.

Practice prevention to keep yourself and others healthy. Stay home if you are sick. Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Use a tissue or the bend of your elbow to avoid contaminating your hands. Minimize hand-to-mouth contact and wash your hands frequently.

The best method for hand washing is to use soap and water, but when those are not available, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer will work.

Perhaps the best defense against the cold or flu is a healthy immune system. Remember to eat a diet low in fat, including plenty of fruits and vegetables, exercise and get plenty of rest.

A gift of love

Children who have to spend Christmas in the hospital worry tender-hearted Katie Greene, 8 of Waxhaw. When she was 6, Katie saw a "Care Bear" and she told her father, "I was walking by, and I noticed these toys, and I got this idea in my head – 'If I could give one of these [toys] to all the sick children, they'd feel better and they could have a happy Christmas.'" Her parents, Dean and Elizabeth Greene, told Katie she would have to raise the money. That first year, in 2007, Katie raised \$162. This year, she raised more than \$9,000! During the 2009 Christmas season she delivered presents to several area hospitals, including Cleveland Regional Medical Center. She is shown here with Veronica Poole-Adams, CRMC's Chief Nurse Executive. For more information or to donate for next year, visit her web site at www.katieskidz.org. Katie says 100 percent of the money is used to purchase items for the children including toys, gift cards and other items that hospital staff has recommended. Several retailers are assisting in her efforts.

DOTTY LEATHERWOOD | CLEVELAND COUNTY HEALTHCARE SYSTEM



JANUARY
2010



HEALTH
The Power of

Giving you

Pink Ribbon Network
January 7
Noon - 1 p.m.
CRMC Oncology Services Board Room

Join us for a gathering for newly diagnosed breast cancer patients. This month's program is titled "Digital Mammography – Questions and Answers" presented by Susie Goins. Lunch will be served. For more information or to register, please call 980-487-3757.

Living Healthy
January 7 - February 11
9:30 a.m. - noon
Trinity Baptist Church Mooresboro

Join us for Living Healthy, a free six-week program to help people living with ongoing health problems. Co-sponsored by Care Solutions. To register, contact Diane Edwards at 704-434-6012.

Bridges
January 11
2 - 3 p.m.
CRMC Blumenthal Cancer Center

Join us for a special educational program to aid recovery during the post-operative period after a mastectomy or lumpectomy. Register two weeks after mastectomy or lumpectomy by calling 980-487-3757.

Diabetes Support Group
January 12
5:30 p.m.
CRMC 2nd floor Grover Building Auditorium

This month's program is titled "Rein in Your Risk of Stroke" presented by Dr. Muhamed Akhta. For more information, please call 980-487-3953.

Car Seat Safety Class
January 21
5:15 p.m.
CRMC Women's Life Center Conference Rm

Join us as we learn about current laws and how to keep your new baby safe while traveling. To register, please call 980-487-3983.

Bridges
January 25
2 - 3 p.m.
CRMC Blumenthal Cancer Center

Join us for a special educational program to aid recovery during the post-operative period after a mastectomy or lumpectomy. Register two weeks after mastectomy or lumpectomy by calling 980-487-3757.

Blood Pressure Screen
January 26
1:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
CRMC Main Lobby

For more information, please call 980-487-3182.

Journey's Coffee and Conversation
January 28
Noon - 1p.m.
Leona Neal Sr. Center 100 T.R. Harris Dr., Shelby

The quarterly Journey topic is, "Advance Care Planning in View of the Healthcare Reform" (Living Will and Healthcare Power-of-Authority) presented by Len Byers, Chaplain. Light refreshments served. For more information, please call 980-487-3855.

Some programs may require pre-registration or appointments. Some require a fee.



Digital Mammography

Cleveland County's first digital mammography offers advanced screening and diagnostic mammograms. The system also features ImageChecker® technology that significantly enhances detection of abnormalities. Since early detection is key to surviving breast cancer, this is an important screening service for local women. **For more information call 980-487-3141.**

Cleveland Regional Medical Center: 980-487-3000
Kings Mountain Hospital: 980-487-5000
www.ClevelandCountyHealthCareSystem.org



Cleveland County HealthCare System