

OCTOBER 2015

## St. Jude named one of the top nursing programs in the United States

In August, St. Jude joined about 7 percent of hospitals nationwide and only two others in Tennessee to achieve Magnet Recognition for nursing excellence. The American Nurses Credentialing Center, an arm of the American Nurses Association, granted St. Jude this prestigious designation. The process included a long and thorough review and a three-day site visit.

Patient families played a key role in the site visit by sharing their opinions about the care they receive at St. Jude.

“We are honored to be recognized as one of the top nursing programs in the country,” said Pam Dotson, RN, senior vice president of patient care services and chief nursing officer. “The mission of nursing at St. Jude is to assure consistent quality nursing care to all patients and their families within a supportive practice environment that promotes employee growth, retention and teamwork.”

The Magnet Recognition Program<sup>®</sup> serves as a benchmark for patients to measure the quality of nursing care they can expect to receive at a hospital. The program recognizes hospitals and other health care groups that provide exceptional care and support of nursing practice. There are many benefits to being a Magnet-recognized hospital. National studies show that such hospitals have fewer patient deaths and medical problems, as well as better patient outcomes.

“Our nursing department exemplifies the finest in skills, dedication and caring commitment,” said Larry Kun, MD, executive vice president and clinical director. “It’s because of the entire staff and their leadership’s guidance we have received this recognition.”

“In so many ways, nurses are the heartbeat of St. Jude,” said James R. Downing, MD, St. Jude president and chief executive officer. “As integral

members of the health care team, our nurses take pride in their profession and demonstrate a profound commitment that benefits every patient who comes to St. Jude. The Magnet designation recognizes our nurses’ dedication to providing St. Jude patients with the highest quality of care.”



## Get ready for Halloween festivities

It’s almost time for trick-or-treating fun. The excitement surrounding Halloween at St. Jude has grown each year as the numbers of children and staff taking part have increased.

Each year a group of employees from several departments looks for new ways to make the event fun and enjoyable for everyone. They strive to continue improving crowd control, safety and security, as well as rules about extra guests.

This year’s Trick-or-Treat festivities for patients and siblings will be held Friday, October 30, from noon to 2 p.m. Hospital staff members will visit the rooms of inpatients in two shifts from 10:30 a.m. to noon for reverse trick-or-treating.

Here are some key things to remember for this year’s

Halloween celebration:

- **All children and families planning to trick-or-treat that day must first stop and pick up a candy bag and a map of the trick-or-treat route in the Patient Care Center (PCC) or Chili’s Care Center Lobby at noon.**
- **To ensure the safety and security of all patients and families, only patients on active treatment and their siblings are invited to take part in the trick-or-treat festivities.**
- **Please remember not to bring or invite outside friends or family members because of the infection risk and for safety reasons.**

## Help us limit cell phone distractions

These days most people are connected to their cell phones around the clock. These devices provide many services for us – alarms, notepad, calendar, music, email, texting, as well as just being a telephone that helps us talk with friends, family members and others. Our phones can also be an incredible distraction. For instance, it’s best to stay off the phone when driving or doing other things that require lots of concentration.

Caring for a St. Jude patient requires parents to learn many new skills. Hearing and understanding what St. Jude staff members are telling you can be vital to your child’s medical care and safety.

Please keep cell phones turned off, silenced or on vibrate when the staff is talking to you about your child’s care. They want you to have the best chance of understanding what is needed for your child. For that to happen, they need your attention.





# Talking about Medicines

## Checking drug levels

By Shane Cross, PharmD, Pharmaceutical Services

Staff members perform drug level tests to measure the amount of a certain drug in the blood. These tests are needed because some medicines can become toxic (harmful) if the level rises too high. Other medicines will not work as well if the level is too low. In many cases, knowing drug levels allows your doctor to prescribe the most effective dose for your child while preventing harmful side effects.

At St. Jude, we monitor the levels of many drugs including cyclosporine (Gengraf®), tacrolimus (Prograf®), sirolimus (Rapamycin®), enoxaparin (Lovenox®), voriconazole (Vfend®), posaconazole (Noxafil®), and methotrexate.

Timing is important when it comes to drug levels. One common type of drug level is called a “pre-dose” or “trough” level. Blood samples for these levels need to be taken before patients take their morning dose. So, for certain drugs, we ask that patients wait to take their morning doses until after a staff member takes a blood sample. However, the timing is not the same for all drugs. For example, levels for enoxaparin (called anti-Xa levels) need to be drawn 4 to 6 hours after a dose has been given.

Be sure to check with your child’s doctor, nurse or pharmacist for the exact details when your child needs a drug level test. Afterward, you can ask them to explain the results. Drug levels help the staff know if any changes need to be made to your child’s dose of medicine.

## All are encouraged to get flu shot

Influenza (the flu) is a virus that causes symptoms like fever, chills, cough and body aches. In patients who have weak immune systems, the disease can be severe. Your child might develop breathing problems that require a hospital stay, or the flu could even lead to death.

The best ways to prevent flu infections are:

- Cleaning hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand cleaner,
- Avoiding contact with those who have flu symptoms,

- Taking anti-viral medicines after exposure to people known to have the flu, and
- Getting an annual flu vaccination.

St. Jude provides the seasonal flu vaccine to your child and to all staff members. Depending on how much vaccine is available, the staff also offers it to parents, other adult caregivers and siblings who are 3 years old or older. Having all members of the family vaccinated helps provide a circle of protection around the patient. It is one way to keep the virus from coming close to your child.

St. Jude infectious disease doctors recommend that all St. Jude patients receive the flu vaccine each year. Some patients may need two shots to provide the best protection. Talk to your child’s doctor to see if your child is eligible for the flu shot and whether one or two shots is recommended to help prevent the flu.

Beginning in October, look for signs on bulletin boards around the hospital for times and locations where you, other caregivers and siblings may receive free flu vaccinations.

*St. Jude Parents* is published on the first of each month by Family-Centered Care Services and Biomedical Communications. Your questions and comments are important to us. **We want to print advice and tips from St. Jude parents to other St. Jude parents.**

To share your ideas or to receive this newsletter by email, please call or email Alicia Huettel, RN, MSN, at 901-595-5453 ([parents\\_newsletter@stjude.org](mailto:parents_newsletter@stjude.org)) or Lois Young ([lois.young@stjude.org](mailto:lois.young@stjude.org)). To subscribe to an online version of this newsletter or to learn more about *St. Jude Parents*, visit [www.stjude.org/parents-newsletter](http://www.stjude.org/parents-newsletter).

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