

DECEMBER 2016

## Making your experience better

**P**atient families have always been a top priority at St. Jude. To make sure that every visit is the best it can be for patient families, the hospital recently created the St. Jude Patient and Family Experience Office.

Janice English was named director of the new office. English, a registered nurse, has been working in pediatric cancer care for nearly 30 years. She has a firsthand understanding of patient and family needs. Under her direction, the office leads a focused effort to re-engineer the patient and family experience at St. Jude.

“While patients and their families routinely give our hospital top marks, we want to ensure they have the best possible overall experience during their time at St. Jude,” said James Downing, MD, St. Jude president and chief executive officer. “Janice brings a wealth of insight to this new position as we work to set the standard for pediatric care delivery in a comfortable and supportive environment.”

English joined St. Jude in 1987 as a pediatric oncology nurse. Since then, she has served as a triage nurse, clini-

cal coordinator and unit manager. For more than 15 years, she has directed the hospital’s ambulatory care unit.

In her new role, English directs efforts to enhance patient family relationships to St. Jude from their first contact with the hospital until their last visit. The office works directly with patients and their families. English and her staff also work closely with the Family Advisory Council to support patient- and family-centered care to provide families with the best overall experiences at the hospital and in St. Jude housing facilities.

“During our current phase of hospital growth, it is important that we ensure the patient experience is our top priority,” English said. “The newly opened inpatient care floors and other improvements show how St. Jude goes above and beyond for patients and their families.”

Three housing facilities offer families comfortable lodging and other amenities. English and her staff will look for possible ways to improve these housing experiences.

The Patient and Family Experience Office also supports patient visits by:

- working to improve how information flows through the system,
- recommending changes in hospital operations and
- suggesting ways to better understand what buildings and other structures and equipment the hospital needs.

If you would like to share ideas or concerns about the experience your family has had at St. Jude, email [patientandfamilyexperience@stjude.org](mailto:patientandfamilyexperience@stjude.org).

**Janice English, RN, director of St. Jude Patient and Family Experience**



## What’s new for this flu season at St. Jude?

It is influenza (flu) season and a few things have changed when it comes to getting the vaccine.

- Only flu *shots* are recommended this season; no flu nose sprays.
- Flu vaccines have been updated to better match the flu viruses that doctors are seeing this season.
- **The egg allergy warnings related to the vaccine have changed according to the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC):**
  - o People who have had only hives after exposure to egg *can* receive the flu vaccine that fits their age and health.
  - o People who have symptoms other than hives after exposure to eggs *can* get the flu vaccine that is right for their age and health. But, the vaccine should be given in a medical setting

by a health care worker, who can recognize and manage severe allergic reactions. These other symptoms of a reaction to eggs include swelling, trouble breathing, feeling lightheaded, vomiting or the need for epinephrine or other emergency medical care. Check with your doctor if you have concerns.

- o **The only patients who should not receive the flu vaccine are those who have had severe reactions to the flu vaccine in the past.**

### Vaccine for St. Jude patients and family members

All St. Jude patients older than 6 months should be vaccinated as soon as possible with the seasonal flu vaccine. The only exception is transplant patients less than 6 months from

transplant or those who have chronic graft-versus-host disease (GVHD).

St. Jude experts suggest that children younger than 18 with weakened immune systems benefit from two doses of seasonal flu vaccine at least four weeks apart. This includes all cancer patients on active therapy and all HIV patients.

It is also important to protect our patients from the flu by vaccinating their siblings and caregivers. Flu vaccines are offered to St. Jude patient siblings (3 years old and above), their parents and other adult caregivers free of charge. You can get your flu shots in the Assessment and Triage area of the Patient Care Center Monday through Friday, from 1–4 p.m.

The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older should get a flu vaccine each year.



# Talking about Medicines

## Medication charts and calendars

By Shane Cross, PharmD, Pharmaceutical Services

To get the most benefit from medicines, it's important to take them exactly as they are prescribed by your doctor, nurse practitioner or physician assistant. However, many factors can make it hard to follow medicine instructions. Some patients must take complex drug regimens. These can include many different drugs that are given many times each day. All of this can lead parents to forget to give a medicine or to have trouble remembering whether or not a drug was already given.

Having an organized system for taking medicines can make a world of difference. One way to help keep track of a medicine schedule is to use a medication chart or calendar. These are written records that list all of the medicines your child takes and the times that each should be taken. The chart or calendar also can contain some of these details:

- Why each medicine is being used
- What each medicine looks like
- Special instructions for each drug

St. Jude pharmacists can help you design a chart or calendar that fits your child's needs. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you would like to know more about medication charts and calendars.

## Tri Delta Place closes December 9 for renovations; reopens February

Beginning Friday, December 9, Tri Delta Place will be closed about 10 weeks for renovations. This will help workers complete the project quickly and reduce disruptions to St. Jude patients and families. Tri Delta Place should reopen in mid-February.

Based on feedback from families, the renovated rooms will include new flooring, updated colors, microwave ovens, refrigerators, improved Wi-Fi, more storage and new furniture. The goal is to make the rooms even more comfortable and functional.

During the project, patients and families who would normally stay in

Tri Delta Place will be in a downtown hotel. Tri Delta Place staff will be located in the Crowne Plaza hotel lobby at a check-in station. St. Jude will host evening events at the hotel, and a hospital shuttle will transport families between the hotel and the St. Jude campus.

Thank you in advance for your patience and understanding as Tri Delta Place improves to better serve your family. The upgrades should be well worth the wait.

Please call Patient Services at 901-595-4501 if you have questions or concerns.

*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). St. Jude is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al 1-866-278-5833 (TTY: 1-901-595-1040).

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## St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

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