A resource center just for patient families

Do you need:
• Time on a computer?
• Internet access?
• Online searching support?
• Copies, printing or scanning?
• Notary services?
• St. Jude education handouts?
• Other medical information?

Guidelines for patients visiting the St. Jude Garden
• Outpatients only
• Check with your St. Jude doctor for permission.
• Have an ANC count greater than 500.
• Isolation patients cannot visit the garden.
• No patients less than 100 days from allogeneic transplant.
• No open wounds unless the wound is covered with a medical dressing or clothes.
• Help control infection by not picking up dirt or plants while in the garden.
• Dirt contains germs that can be harmful to some patients. After visiting, please go back to housing or home to clean up before returning to St. Jude.

The St. Jude Garden offers open hours

The St. Jude Garden helps supply home-grown foods for the Kay Kafe. The gardeners are now offering open hours for patient families to visit the garden every Tuesday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. The garden is just one block west of the St. Jude campus. The St. Jude Garden is a nice place to hang out or you could bring your lunch to eat outdoors. Come enjoy the fresh air and peaceful surroundings.

Fun with food for St. Jude families

Clinical Nutrition Services is offering two new classes for St. Jude patient families.

Snack and Learn teaches kids and caregivers of all ages how to select nutritious snacks and how to use snacks to help meet the needs of a healthy diet. Taste testing snacks is everyone’s favorite part. The class is offered every Wednesday from 10–10:30 a.m. in the H Clinic lobby. No need to register; just show up.

Nutritolicious: Cooking for St. Jude Kids teaches patients and siblings ages 6 and older cooking skills and how to use healthy ingredients in everyday meals. The class is offered every Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30–10:30 a.m. in the Kay Kafe rotunda. Talk to your clinic staff to sign up for this class.

To learn more about either class, email Karen Smith at karen.smith@stjude.org or call 901-595-2184.
Check before crushing medicines
By Shane Cross, PharmD, Pharmaceutical Services

Tablets and capsules come in many shapes and sizes. Sometimes children have trouble swallowing them whole. Other times, patients may have feeding tubes placed, which makes medicine giving easier. These tubes are sometimes nasogastric (NG) tubes and other times gastrostomy (G) tubes.

Whether your child must swallow medicine or has a feeding tube, the staff might instruct you to crush the tablets or open the capsules for easier use. While this method is OK for some drugs, you need to know that not all medicines should be crushed or opened.

Some tablets and capsules are designed to release medicine slowly through time. These types of drugs are often called "extended release" or "sustained release." If crushed, they could release all of the medicine at one time, and with some drugs this could be dangerous.

Other medicines have special coatings that either protect the stomach from irritation by the drug or prevent the stomach from breaking down the drug too soon. If you remove or break these coatings, then the medicine could hurt the stomach or become less effective than usual.

If you have questions about whether or not you should crush or open your child’s medicines, check with a St. Jude pharmacist. Together, we can ensure that your child gets the safest and most effective treatment.

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,
• Getting an annual flu vaccination, and
• Taking anti-viral medicines after exposure to people known to have the flu (under a doctor’s advice).

St. Jude provides the seasonal flu vaccine to your child, to adults who live with and care for your child, to siblings who are 3 years old or older, and to all staff members. 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.

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