

FEBRUARY 2020

## Visiting guidelines help prevent illness

**M**any St. Jude patients have weak immune systems. This means they can become seriously ill from a common cold or the flu. Parents and visitors should not enter the hospital if they are sick or have been exposed to illnesses that are easy to spread (contagious).

Healthy parents and other primary caregivers may stay with their children 24 hours a day, because they are not considered visitors. If you are your child's only caregiver and you feel sick, please do not come to the hospital and avoid the common areas of patient housing. If you have a fever and other symptoms such as coughing, sneezing or a runny nose, clean your hands often and wear a mask when you are around your child.

Visitors and parents should follow these guidelines at all times:

- Clean your hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based cleaner every time you enter and leave a patient room.
- Please follow all posted guidelines for using masks, gowns and gloves.
- Anyone who will be around your child should get an annual flu shot.
- Many patients make friends at St. Jude; however, for the health of each child it is important that patients not visit other inpatient rooms. Also, outpatients should not visit the inpatient floors.
- Parents and visitors should not sit or sleep on a patient's bed. It is important to keep the number of germs low in the area where your child sleeps, especially around your child's face.
- Friends and family members 7 years old or older may visit your

child without restrictions. Please talk to your care team if you think it is important for someone younger than 7 to be with your child.

- Before they are allowed to visit your child, all children younger than 7 must be screened daily. The staff needs to be sure that these kids do not have illnesses that are easy to spread to your child or other patients.

To learn more, ask your child's nurse for a copy of "Do you know... Visiting Guidelines." You can also find it online at [stjude.org](http://stjude.org); search for "visiting guidelines."

## Medicine handling safety guidelines change

In the next couple of months, you may see St. Jude staff wearing more protective gear while giving patients some medicines. New national guidelines require staff to wear protective gear like gowns, gloves, goggles and face shields to handle certain medicines safely.

The new guidelines cover more medicines than just chemotherapy. In some cases, staff handling these medicines might have already worn some gear, but they will now wear more. For example, goggles and face shields are now required for giving certain medicines.

These new national guidelines are designed to promote patient and worker safety and to protect the environment.

### Four things you should know

- The medicines are not a danger to patients. However, they can be hazardous to staff who repeatedly handle multiple medicines for different patients daily.
- It is safe to share a room with patients taking these medicines. The precautions apply only to

those who give medicines to patients or handle the bodily fluids of patients who recently took the medicines.

- If your child is taking any of these medicines, you will see a sign outside the hospital room door or a sticker on the patient armband. These remind staff to wear protective gear, which might include gowns, goggles, face shields and gloves.
- Parents or other caregivers might be told to wear gloves when giving some medicines at home or handling bodily fluids of patients taking those medicines. The Do You Know guide called "Protecting Caregivers From Drug Hazards" will provide more details. You can find it at [stjude.org](http://stjude.org) by searching for "protecting caregivers." Your nurse can help you get gloves if they are recommended. Thank you for your understanding. Patient and staff safety is always a high priority at St. Jude.

## Sign up for the My St. Jude patient portal

The *My St. Jude* patient portal is a secure, interactive website where you can do the following:

- View portions of your child's medical record anytime.
- Check on recent lab results.
- Read discharge instructions.
- View your child's personal information and send updates to Patient Registration.
- Check your child's latest schedule or request schedule changes.
- Even send non-urgent messages to your child's health care team.

It is important to note that *My St. Jude* should never be used for urgent matters that you believe may affect your child's health or well-being.

### How to sign up

*My St. Jude* is an easy way to have quick access to all the information above 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you would like to sign up for a *My St. Jude* account, please talk to a Patient Registration staff member, or you can download the application at [stjude.org/mystjude](http://stjude.org/mystjude).

Taking part in *My St. Jude* is one more way you can help the hospital staff continue to provide the best possible care for your child.



## Talking about Medicines

### Discarding unused and expired medicines safely

By the St. Jude Pharmacy Staff

Medicine cabinets across America are bursting at the seams with unused and expired medicines. Many people do not know what to do with them. Often they just toss them in the trash, pour them down the sink or flush them down a toilet. This is no longer seen as the correct way to dispose of most medicines. It can contaminate our drinking water and our environment. Properly disposing of medicines also helps keep your family safe from accidental poisoning.

Here are a few tips on how to properly and safely dispose of medicines.

**Bring expired medicines to the MedSafe® box.** This blue kiosk is located near the St. Jude Outpatient Pharmacy. It can accept most over-the-counter and prescription medicines. *Do not* use the MedSafe box to throw away investigational medicines and medicine devices or supplies, like inhalers, syringes and needles.

**Attend a prescription drug take-back event.** These events are held by law enforcement agencies around the country. The events allow the community to turn in unwanted prescription and over-the-counter medicines. To learn about the next event date and locations in your area, visit [deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug\\_disposal/takeback/](http://deadiversion.usdoj.gov/drug_disposal/takeback/).

**Some medicines can be thrown away in household trash after following a few steps.** Instead of flushing old medicines down the toilet or pouring them down the sink, remove them from their original containers. Place the expired drugs in a sealable bag or container. Then, mix them with things like wet coffee grounds or used kitty litter. This will make them unappealing to anyone who might find them in the trash. Seal the bag or container and toss it in the trash. Opioid pain medicines and other controlled substances are exceptions. The Food and Drug Administration recommends flushing these down the toilet. It will reduce the risk of children and pets accidentally swallowing these drugs.

To learn more about how to dispose of medicines, visit the FDA website [fda.gov](http://fda.gov).

### No perfume, aftershave or scented lotions

Please do not wear perfume, aftershave or scented lotion when you are in the hospital. For patients in treatment, perfumes, aftershaves and lotions can smell intensely strong.

For many patients, these smells can increase their feelings of nausea (feeling sick to their stomachs). If someone is wearing a strong scent that is bothering your child, please talk to a staff member about it.

*St. Jude Parents* is published on the first of each month by Patient Education 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 Samantha Ransone, RN, PhD, at 901-595-3334 ([ParentsNewsletter@stjude.org](mailto:ParentsNewsletter@stjude.org)) or Lois Young ([loislane.young@comcast.net](mailto:loislane.young@comcast.net)). 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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ATTENTION: If you speak another language, assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call 1-866-278-5833 (TTY: 1-901-595-1040).

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

تنبيه: إذا كنت تتحدث باللغة العربية فيمكنك الاستعانة بخدمات المساعدة اللغوية المتوفرة لك مجاناً. يرجى الاتصال بالرقم (الهاتف النصي): 1-866-278-5833 (1-901-595-1040).



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