

ENGAGE

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Self-Checks
Could Save Your Life



Howard Memorial
hospital

Fall 2022

Cold & Flu Season is Here:

Here's How You Can Prepare to Avoid Illness

Now that fall is here so is another, less desirable, season—cold and flu season. While you can catch a cold or the flu any time of year, fall and winter see a sharp uptick in cases. This means now is the time to take extra precautions to avoid getting sick.

Gayla Hooker, RN, BSN, RRT, Director of Infection Prevention at HMH, helps break down the best ways to prepare for cold and flu season and what to expect if you become infected with influenza.

“The best way to reduce the risk of flu and its potentially serious complications is to get vaccinated every year. For best protection it's recommended to get vaccinated by the end of October.”

Since 2010, flu vaccines have been recommended for everyone six months and older with few exceptions. And fortunately, they are conveniently available at most local pharmacies without the need for an appointment.

There is a slight change in recommendation for the preferential flu vaccine people over 65 should receive. Unlike previous years, it's now recommended that people in this age group receive an adjuvanted vaccine. This type of vaccine prompts a stronger immune response than typical flu vaccines, which is helpful for people over 65 who may have a lower overall immune response than those who are younger.

In addition to getting your flu shot, there are other steps you can take to help reduce your chance of getting sick this fall and winter.



Reduce your chances of getting sick by:

- Avoid close contact with anyone you know to be sick
- Practice good hand hygiene and keep hand sanitizer with you when on the go
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Clean and disinfect high touch areas frequently
- Get enough rest (we know—easier said than done!)
- Eat a well-balanced diet
- Stay physically active

Even if you take every precaution, there is still a chance you catch a cold or come down with the flu. If that's the case, there are steps you can take to feel better as you recover. And for more severe cases of the flu, the primary care team at Howard Memorial Hospital is here to provide treatment that can help shorten the length of the illness or reduce the severity of symptoms.

“We offer many ways for patients to connect with our primary care team when sick,” Kaitlyn Gunn, Clinic Manager, shared, “these include extended hours, after-hours nursing line, telemedicine and more.”

Some common flu symptoms to watch out for are:

- Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Muscle or body aches
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Vomiting and diarrhea
(more common in children than adults)

If you think you have the flu and are part of a group at higher risk for severe flu complications such as pneumonia, or simply feel that your illness isn't something you can cope with safely at home, it's recommended to see a primary care provider. They can provide a more accurate diagnosis of your illness and recommend treatment, such as antiviral drugs.

When it comes to managing illness at home, these tips can help you feel better and reduce your risk of spreading infection to other people:

- Stay home and avoid close contact with other members of the household if possible
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing
- Wash your hands frequently
- Rest as often as possible
- Stay hydrated
- Keep OTC cold and flu medicines on hand

All of us at Howard Memorial Hospital, hope that you and your loved ones prepare for cold and flu season as best you can to avoid serious illness. Getting your flu shot is a great place to start. And if you do find yourself sick with a cold or the flu, remember we're here to provide care and treatment to help you get back on your feet.



Meet Tugi Myers, NP

Our Newest Primary Care Provider!



Specialty:
Family Medicine



College:
Master of Science in Nursing
Walden University



Associate Degree in Nursing
Texarkana College

"I pursued a career in healthcare to make a positive difference in the lives of others," Tugi shared. "And I'm fortunate to be doing that at HMH. I love the people I work with. We all work well together to ensure each patient is cared for."

Outside of work, Tugi loves spending time outdoors—especially at the beach. And she enjoys reading and attending her kids' many extracurricular activities.

We're thrilled to have her as a member of the Howard Memorial Hospital primary care team!

Get started on your healthy goals today!

To learn more or to schedule an appointment with Tugi Myers, NP, call **870-845-6060**.



There's No Better Time Than Now to Focus on Breast Health

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month



The pinkest time of the year is here—Breast Cancer Awareness Month—and with it comes the reminder that staying on top of breast health through regular screening mammograms and self-checks is essential.

99%
SURVIVAL
RATE

According to Cancer.org, the survival rate of localized cancer that hasn't spread outside of the breast is **99% after five years**, while the survival rate of distant cancer—cancer that has spread to other parts of the body such as lungs or bones—is a **much lower 29%**.

And the best way to avoid a diagnosis of distant or advanced stage breast cancer? Early detection.

"Certain cancers can be really fast growing and not detecting them right away can lead to a change in health prognosis very quickly," said Stacy Harberson, Howard Memorial Hospital radiology department manager. "This is why mammograms are so important."

Howard Memorial Hospital has a team of four mammography technologists who provide compassionate and comprehensive care to women of all ages and with all health histories. Their experience, combined with the state-of-the-art mammography system at HMH, ensure that patients receive the most accurate diagnosis possible.

The radiology team is proud to use the Hologic Selenia Dimensions 3D Mammography System, which offers many benefits over traditional 2D mammograms.

The Hologic Selenia Dimensions system is:

- Proven to detect up to 65% more invasive cancers compared to 2D alone
- Proven to reduce callbacks by 40% compared to 2D alone
- FDA approved as superior for women with dense breasts compared to 2D alone

A 3D mammogram takes multiple digital images of the breast from various angles. The images are then viewed individually as “slices” providing exceptionally detailed views of tissues to help detect cancer at its earliest stages.

“This system really provides the best detection for patients, particularly those who have especially dense breasts that may hide signs of cancer [that may not be detected] with a 2D mammogram,” Stacy explained. “It allows us to see smaller areas of cancer much earlier while being no longer or more invasive than a traditional mammogram.”

Howard Memorial Hospital recommends all women start annual mammograms at age 40—or earlier if they have a family history of breast cancer. Screening mammograms are offered every day of the week, and diagnostic mammograms are scheduled on Tuesday mornings. Stacy says the goal is to make scheduling mammograms as convenient as possible.

“We’re fortunate to have a team of four mammogram techs,” Stacy shared. This means people are able to schedule their mammograms quickly and when it works best for their schedule.”



Hannah’s Story

Self-checks can save your life!

Mammography tech Hannah Sullivan learned this all too well, when she felt a lump on her breast at only 27 years old. After finding the lump, she went in for a mammogram and was diagnosed with breast cancer.

“I didn’t have a family history of breast cancer, so it goes to show that family history isn’t the only indicator you can get it,” Hannah said. “If you feel a lump or notice any concerning changes in your breasts, just go in and get the mammogram.”

Fortunately, Hannah’s cancer was able to be successfully treated with a double mastectomy. But the experience was a wakeup call to the importance of early detection and not assuming there is an age limit to breast cancer.

Hannah’s sister, Jenny James, a school nurse, shared how seeing her sister battle breast cancer changed her outlook on breast health.

“Since she was so young, it really helped me to start paying attention to my breast health earlier than I probably would have—you just don’t think about getting cancer at that age,” Jenny shared. “But ever since, I’ve gone in for a mammogram every year.”

“Often we think ‘oh, it won’t happen to me’ but it absolutely can. And ignoring that fact won’t make cancer go away if you have it,” she said. “Getting a regular mammogram is quick and easy—and can truly save your life.”





Meet HMH's New Chief Nursing Officer

Paula Mitchell

New CNO Paula Mitchell sat down for a chat about what brought her to Howard Memorial Hospital and how she can't wait to make a difference in the health of our community.

First off, what inspired a career in the healthcare field?

I actually didn't go to nursing school until I was in my 30s. At that point in my life, I wanted to do something more. My sister was a nurse and after listening to her talk about her job, it intrigued me; I wanted to help people and make a difference. Nursing school helped me grow and opened my eyes to see people in a different way. It's very rewarding.

How has your time at HMH been so far?

The people here are so wonderful, and I love the feel of living in a smaller community. Even though I haven't been here long, it feels like home. I couldn't ask for better people to work with and am really looking forward to connecting with the staff more and getting to know everyone in and around Nashville.

What do you hope to accomplish in your role as CNO?

We are looking at ways to grow as a facility—we don't want to stagnate. For me, the ultimate goal is to help grow the services available at the hospital to better serve our patients and keep care as local as possible. I'm excited to help figure out what areas of need the community has and then find ways we can help the most. The community is really what drives us to grow.

Can you share a bit about your professional journey before taking the position of CNO at HMH?

After getting my BSN, I worked for St. Vincent Hospital in Monroe, Louisiana, first in the adult ICU and then in the emergency department where I eventually became the department manager. I went on to get my MSN with a focus on education and started teaching at Louisiana Tech where I taught critical care. Still wanting to learn more, I received my Doctorate in Nursing Administration and Education. Then after meeting my husband who is from Arkansas, I decided to move here to be with him. Once I saw this position, it felt like a great fit for me and I applied—it's been a great new adventure so far.

Stepping outside the CNO box for a minute, what do you enjoy doing when not at work?

I have two grandchildren who are very special to me, and who I try to visit as often as I can. I'm also learning to play golf as it's something my husband loves to do. I love to read and enjoy just relaxing at home with my dog, Gigi. Plus, I really enjoy experiencing new places and people.

Is there anything else you'd like to share with the community?

I really am thrilled to be here and if anyone wants to stop in and say "hi" I would love it. I have an open-door policy and welcome any and all feedback. Feel free to reach out to me at any time.



Easy Tips to Eat Healthy During the Holidays

They're almost here—the trifecta of food-focused holidays that can lead to an abundance of often unhealthy (albeit tasty!) meals and morsels to eat.

Among Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas it's tempting to overlook healthy eating in the name of holiday fun. But Howard Memorial Hospital registered dietician nutritionist Denise Graves has some tips and tricks that will allow you to fully enjoy the festivities without risking a food coma that'll leave you feeling more miserable than merry.

Tip #1

Don't skip a meal! It can be tempting to skip breakfast if you know you're going to indulge in a larger lunch or dinner, but that can lead to increased overeating later and even lower your metabolism for the day. Instead, start the day with a light, filling breakfast like a veggie and egg scramble or plain Greek yogurt with berries.

Tip #2

If you're asked to bring a dish to the event, bring a healthy option. This guarantees there will be a nutritious choice that you'll want to eat—no matter where you are.

Tip #3

Remember the first bite of dessert is best, so when you indulge in a sweet treat, stick to a generous bite or two. This ensures you'll enjoy it without feeling stuffed a few minutes later.

Tip #4

Keep track of the appetizers or finger foods you eat with the toothpick trick.

If you want to keep yourself at no more than five servings, place five toothpicks in your pocket. After each food you eat, move a toothpick to a different pocket until all are moved—then you know to stop snacking.

Tip #5

Eat slowly to savor each bite. This gives you time to enjoy holiday indulgences and helps your brain signal when you're full to avoid overeating or reaching that uncomfortable fullness often associated with holiday eating.

"I may be a nutritionist, but I'm in the same boat as everyone else," Denise shared. "I love to eat and socialize during the holidays, and I don't deprive myself of enjoying that. There aren't any 'bad' foods. We simply need to remember that balance is important and eating a mix of indulgent and nutritious foods will help us feel our best when celebrating with family and friends."



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