

# An ounce of prevention keeps the germs away.

Follow these simple, inexpensive tips to stop the spread of many infectious diseases:



#### WASH YOUR HANDS OFTEN

Keeping your hands clean is one of the best ways to keep from getting sick and spreading illness.



#### CLEAN AND DISINFECT SURFACES OFTEN

Cleaning with soap and water and scrubbing are good. Following that with a disinfectant is even better.



#### HANDLE AND PREPARE FOOD SAFELY

- Clean hands and surfaces often
- Don't cross-contaminate one food with another
- Cook foods to proper temperatures
- Refrigerate foods promptly



#### GET IMMUNIZED

Getting immunized is easy, low-cost and saves lives. Make sure you and your kids get the shots suggested by your doctor.



#### USE ANTIBIOTICS APPROPRIATELY

Antibiotics don't work against viruses such as colds and flu. Unnecessary antibiotics can be harmful. Antibiotics should be taken exactly as prescribed by your doctor.



#### BE CAREFUL WITH PETS

Pets should be routinely cared for by a vet. Babies and children under 5 should be watched carefully around pets and animals. Always wash your hands after touching animals or animal waste.



#### AVOID CONTACT WITH WILD ANIMALS

Wild animals can carry deadly diseases and pass them on to you and your pets. Do not leave food lying around and keep your garbage cans sealed.

For more information about how you can help stop the spread of disease, ask your doctor or call UMMC's Infection Prevention Manager, Lorri Goergen RN BSN CIC, at 585-344-5436

[www.ummc.org](http://www.ummc.org)



United Memorial  
Medical Center

Content courtesy of the CDC's "OOP" campaign materials and other sources.

## A message from United Memorial Medical Center



United Memorial  
Medical Center

Quality care right at home.

For over a hundred years the residents of Genesee County have turned to United Memorial for a life that is just beginning, a life to be restored or an end of life transition. And, we would like to thank the community for trusting us with that important care.

As an organization we have successfully faced many challenges. We have cared for a surge of trauma victims following the Amtrak crash in 1994, weathered the tumultuous merger process of our two community hospitals and surmounted troubling financial difficulties. The former St. Jerome Hospital has been completely repurposed to provide outpatient medical services and senior housing, and this past winter, we completed the surgical expansion project—a project that was contemplated over 12 years ago. While these are noteworthy milestones, it's the work we do each day that brings us the greatest sense of pride and accomplishment; caring for our neighbors, friends and family.

One of our most recent challenges occurred in April this year when *Clostridium Difficile* (C. diff) brought a great deal of media attention to our facility. While the hospital cannot comment publicly on any specific patient due to federal privacy regulations, we were transparent with the media as to the number of cases of C. diff at United Memorial at that time for treatment and went to great lengths to explain the illness, its inherent risks, and the fact that it is commonly addressed at all hospitals. We feel great compassion and sympathy for any family coping with a serious illness. We viewed the media attention as an opportunity to educate the community about C. diff and other drug-resistant infections. Our best efforts were significantly overshadowed by sensational headlines and inaccuracies which for some people led to unnecessary apprehension about the safety and quality of care at United Memorial.

Addressing drug-resistant infections is now a common challenge for all hospitals. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) consider resistance to antibiotics a serious public health threat. Resistance is difficult for hospitals, where many immuno-suppressed people with other underlying health factors are gathered. As with pneumonia and influenza, those who are medically frail are most at risk when a drug-resistant infection develops.

**We want to assure our community that United Memorial is a safe hospital.**

United Memorial has worked very hard to stay "ahead of the curve" in an ever-changing environment of new regulations and health threats. Our quality scores, for the services we provide, meet or exceed New York State averages. We work diligently to prevent the spread of hospital acquired infections and have implemented some of the most advanced approaches to infection prevention.

C. diff is one of a number of drug-resistant organisms monitored by United Memorial. It was through our routine monitoring procedures that we noticed a slight increase in C. diff cases in March and contacted the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH). We wanted to confirm that the prevention measures we had in place were appropriate, to collaborate and share information and to access Wadsworth Laboratories for advanced testing.

UMMC was praised in a letter from the NYSDOH dated April 29, 2011, **"You and your staff are to be commended for your prompt initiation of outbreak control measures and your responsiveness to our recommendations."**

It is important to remember that each of us comes in contact with bacteria as part of our daily routines at home, at work and in the community. They can be carried on our clothing, bodies, and belongings. For those in good health, there may be no impact. Individuals who are frail or immuno-compromised can suffer greatly if drug-resistant bacteria develop into an infection. Practicing good hand hygiene is the most important thing we can all do in preventing the spread of illness.

**United Memorial remains committed to patient safety.** We encourage you to become more familiar with drug resistant illnesses, what you can do to help prevent the spread of infection and we look to you as a partner in creating a healthier community.

Mark C. Schoell  
PRESIDENT AND CEO

Thomas E. Houseknecht  
CHAIR, UMMC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael D. Merrill, MD  
VICE PRESIDENT OF MEDICAL AFFAIRS

# Important Health & Safety Information for Our Community

FROM UNITED MEMORIAL MEDICAL CENTER



## Proper hand hygiene is everyone's responsibility.



Practicing good hand hygiene is the single most important thing you can do to stop the spread of infection. At United Memorial Medical Center, we know it's a healthy habit for anyone, whether you are in the hospital, at work, or at home.

And remember, it's ok to ask anyone at our facilities to clean their hands... **the health of our community matters.**

### WHY IS HAND HYGIENE SO IMPORTANT TO US?

- Germs are everywhere
- Sick people get infections easier
- Infections can keep patients in the hospital longer
- Even healthy people can spread germs
- Good hand hygiene is a healthy habit

Both soap and water and waterless alcohol hand rubs are extremely effective at reducing the number of germs present on the skin.

### AT THE HOSPITAL, HAND WASHING SHOULD BE DONE BY EVERYONE:

- When entering a patient's room or before touching or administering care
- Upon leaving a patient's room, if they have touched the patient or anything object in the room

In addition, soap and water should be used when hands are visibly dirty, soiled with blood or other bodily fluids, after visiting a restroom and before and after eating.

### A MESSAGE ON MEDICINE

## Antibiotics aren't always the answer.

What's the harm in taking antibiotics anytime? Using antibiotics when they are not needed causes some bacteria to become resistant to the antibiotic.

These resistant bacteria are stronger and harder to kill. They can stay in your body and can cause severe illness that cannot be cured with antibiotics. A cure for resistant bacteria may require stronger treatment—and possibly a stay in the hospital.

To avoid the threat of antibiotic-resistant infections, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that you avoid taking unnecessary antibiotics.

### Bacteria

cause strep throat, some pneumonia and sinus infections.

Antibiotics can work.

### Viruses

cause the common cold, most coughs and the flu.

Antibiotics won't work.

### Help us provide quality care.

Don't use antibiotics to treat the common cold or flu.

If antibiotics are prescribed for you to treat a bacterial infection—such as strep throat—be sure to take all of the medicine. Only using part of the prescription means that only part of the infection has been treated. Not finishing the medicine can cause resistant bacteria to develop.

### COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ANTIBIOTICS

**How do I know if I have a viral or bacterial infection?**

Ask your healthcare provider and follow his or her advice on what to do about your illness.

Remember, colds are caused by viruses and should not be treated with antibiotics.

**Won't an antibiotic help me feel better quicker so that I can get back to work when I get a cold or the flu?**

No. Antibiotics do nothing to help a viral illness. They will not help you feel better sooner. Ask your healthcare provider what other treatments are available to treat your symptoms.

**If mucus from the nose changes from clear to yellow or green, does this mean I need an antibiotic?**

No. Yellow or green mucus does not mean that you have a bacterial infection. It is normal for mucus to get thick and change color during a viral cold.

### DON'T FORGET...

- Antibiotics are strong medicines, but they don't cure everything.
- When not used correctly, antibiotics can actually be harmful to your health.
- Antibiotics cure most bacterial infections. Antibiotics cannot cure viral illnesses.
- When you are sick, antibiotics are not always the answer.