Stop the flu before it stops you

What’s a good way to protect your health and the health of those around you this fall? Get a flu shot! The best time to be vaccinated is from October through December.

Aurora Health Care’s Shoo the Flu & Pneumonia Too! community clinics are coming soon (see sidebar).

Because flu strains vary from year to year, an annual vaccination is recommended for everyone, every year. People at high risk for complications from the flu are especially encouraged to get an annual flu shot. This includes men and women age 50 and above, as well as people of any age who have chronic medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes or heart disease).

Why don’t people get vaccinated?

Many people who should be vaccinated are not. Here are a few of the common reasons, and some facts to consider:

“I’m not likely to get the flu.” If you have never had the flu, that’s great – but it doesn’t mean you are immune to it. Influenza is a serious disease. Every year in the United States, more than 36,000 people die from it. It’s even possible to have a mild case of the flu and not realize it. If this happens, you could be passing the germs onto your family and friends. By being vaccinated, you are protecting yourself and others from this potentially dangerous disease.

“The flu shot will give me the flu.” The flu shot is made from killed or “dead” viruses, so you cannot get the flu from it. However, it does take a couple of weeks for antibodies to build up in your body to protect you. In the meantime, you could get the flu, but it would not be from the shot.

“I don’t think the flu shot works.” Medical research has shown that the yearly vaccine is the single best way to prevent the flu. Again, once you have been vaccinated, you are still at risk for getting the flu until the antibodies build up in your body. That’s why it’s best to get vaccinated early in the fall, before the flu season really gets under way.

“Tío concerned about the side effects.” The most common side effects from the flu shot are soreness, redness or swelling at the injection site, and/or low fever. If these side effects occur, they usually last one to two days after the shot.

See Stop the flu on page 7
Restless Legs Syndrome and a restless night's sleep

Afer a busy day, nothing seems more welcoming than the opportunity to sit down and put your feet up, or to crawl into bed and get some rest. But then it begins, the tingling, tugging or aching sensation in your legs, along with a strong urge to get up and move about. Your first instinct is to attribute the discomfort to stress, anxiety or muscle cramps; however, these symptoms could be a sign of a sleep disorder called Restless Legs Syndrome.

Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS) is a disruptive neurologic condition associated with periods of inactivity, rest, relaxation or sleep. Symptoms of RLS range from mild to severe discomfort, but any level of disruption can lead to sleep deprivation and other complications associated with sleep disorders. The condition also can make extended car or airplane travel difficult.

It is estimated that up to 10 percent of people in the U.S. have RLS. Restless Legs Syndrome can develop at any age but is most common in people over age 60.

Along with a bothersome sensation in the legs, other symptoms of RLS include awakening frequently during the night, tossing and turning during sleep, involuntary, repetitive jerking movements that interrupt relaxation or sleep, and the need to rub/massage your legs. Since the uncomfortable sensations associated with RLS are normally relieved with movement or activity, RLS can lead to insomnia. See Restless legs on page 8

Aurora Sinai is “ACE” of elderly care

More than a decade ago, several geriatricians at Aurora Sinai Medical Center began looking for a way to improve care for some of the hospital’s most complex, vulnerable patients: the elderly. Frail, elderly patients are more susceptible to falls, bed sores, infections and confusion. They often have multiple medical conditions. And they are at a greater risk of a “cascade of complications” taking hold when hospitalized. An initial gift of $90,000 from the Freemasons helped establish the Acute Care for the Elderly (ACE) unit at Aurora Sinai Medical Center. Since that initial contribution, the Freemasons have provided over $750,000 in additional support for the program.

The ACE unit led to the development of software used throughout much of Aurora to care for elderly patients. The software — Acute Care for the Elderly Tracker — provides a snapshot of the potential risks for patients who are 65 and older, enabling teams to identify and monitor patients at the greatest risk. The snapshot includes age, medications, high-risk medications, assessments for risk of falls or bed sores, history of dementia, use of urinary catheters and other information.

Asking questions
The ACE Tracker software ensures that questions are being asked for elderly patients throughout a hospital.

Does a patient need a urinary catheter? The catheters increase the risk of infections that are particularly dangerous for the elderly. Is the patient getting up and walking?
When elderly patients are bedridden, their ability to take care of themselves can deteriorate quickly.

Teams include a clinical nurse specialist, social worker, pharmacist and physical or occupational therapist throughout Aurora. Twice a week, a geriatrician joins the teams, either in person or by teleconference. Because patients’ medical records are available across all of Aurora, geriatricians at Aurora Sinai are able to advise a team in Kenosha or Oshkosh. It also gives smaller hospitals access to geriatricians, a medical specialty in short supply.

Different perspective
The ACE Tracker software enables a hospital to track how it performs in caring for elderly patients. It is not used for patients in every unit, and the software and interdisciplinary teams don’t eliminate every risk. The ultimate goal is for everyone involved in a patient’s care to understand basic geriatric concepts.

Michael Malone, MD, medical director of senior services for Aurora Health Care and professor of medicine at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and
Aurora Pharmacy

Aurora Pharmacy continually searches for better ways to help you manage your health, and that means going well beyond just dispensing medication. We strive to make sure you get the personal service that you need. For a location near you, call 888-973-8999 or visit AuroraPharmacy.org.

Aurora QuickCare

Aurora QuickCare is a fast, convenient, affordable way to get common health concerns diagnosed and treated by a nurse practitioner or physician's assistant who provides a prescription if needed. With day, evening and weekend hours, Aurora QuickCare is health care for people on the go. For more information or the location nearest you, call 877-QUICK02 or visit Aurora.org/QuickCare.

Aurora Vision Center

Aurora Vision Center is committed to exceptional service and providing quality products at affordable prices. Highly trained and qualified optometrists offer comprehensive eye exams for patients of all ages. Our team of professional opticians will help you make the right choice from our large selection of eyewear. Visit us and receive a complimentary eyeglass cleaning and adjustment. For a location near you, call 866-986-2777 or visit us at Aurora.org/VisionCenter.

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Holiday Pops Spectacular with Jeff Tyzik
Sunday, December 4 • 2:30 p.m.
Uihlein Hall • Marcus Center for the Performing Arts

Orders must be received by Monday, Nov. 14. For more information, call Luther Gray at the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, 414-226-7840.

Holiday Pops Spectacular
Sunday, Dec. 4 at 2:30 p.m.

Name ____________________________________________ Phone ________________________________
Address ___________________________________________________________
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No. of Tickets: ___ Orchestra, Main Floor @ $40.00 ea. ___ Orchestra, Side Rear @ $27.00 ea.
___ Center Loge @ $32.25 ea. ___ Rear Loge, Balcony @ $17.25 ea.

Total number of tickets __________ Total amount enclosed $ __________

Make check payable to: Luther Gray
Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra
Mail your check and this completed form in a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:
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Director of Group Sales
Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra
700 N. Water Street, Suite 700
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Ticket prices include a special 35% discount and facility fee.

Consumer health information at the Aurora Libraries

Millions of Americans search for health information on the Web every year. Clicking on a favorite search engine and entering a disease or medical condition can result in hundreds, even thousands, of “hits.” This can be discouraging. Sometimes the information found is just what was needed. Other searches end in frustration or retrieval of inaccurate, even dangerous, information.

Aurora Health Care wants to help. You can call an Aurora Library and ask to have information sent to you, or you can attend a free class to learn how to find reputable health information. You can also visit any of the seven Aurora Libraries, use their online resources and check out consumer health books.

For more information, call your nearest Aurora Library
• Aurora St. Luke’s Medical Center 414-649-7356
• Aurora Sinai Medical Center 414-219-6710
• Aurora West Allis Medical Center 414-328-7910
• Aurora Medical Center in Grafton 262-329-1025
• Aurora Medical Center in Oshkosh 920-456-7039
• Aurora Medical Center in Summit 262-434-1070
• Aurora BayCare Medical Center 920-288-3058

Upcoming classes
Wednesday, September 7 • Noon to 1 p.m.
Aurora Baycare Medical Center
2845 Greenbrier Road, Green Bay

Tuesday, September 13 • 11 to noon
Aurora West Allis Medical Center
8901 W. Lincoln Avenue, Milwaukee

Wednesday, October 5 • 10 to 11:30 a.m.
- OR -
Wednesday, November 2 • 5 to 6:30 p.m.
Aurora Medical Center
855 N. Westhaven Drive, Oshkosh

Friday, November 4 • 10 to 11 a.m.
Aurora St. Luke’s Medical Center
2900 W. Oklahoma Avenue, Milwaukee

Tuesday, November 8 • 9 to 10 a.m.
Aurora Medical Center
36500 Aurora Drive, Summit
New Telestroke technology available in Washington County provides hope to stroke patients

A stroke is caused by interrupted blood flow to the brain. Each year, approximately 795,000 Americans suffer a stroke. When timely care is received, stroke may be treatable — reducing brain damage and improving functional recovery.

Telestroke technology, now available at the Aurora Medical Center in Washington County, reduces the amount of time between when a patient comes through the emergency department door and when they are evaluated by an expert in stroke care.

The Telestroke technology allows off-site neurology specialists with laptop computers to communicate with emergency department physicians. With the aid of a computer-video system placed on a portable cart in the ED, this two-way audio-visual examination and dialogue occurs over the Internet. The system also allows for other information, including tests, reports and medical history, to be shared electronically with the specialist.

With all the tools and information at their fingertips, the neurology specialist and the emergency department staff work together to develop a care plan for acute stroke therapy, which may include IVtPA and more advanced therapies that use special catheters to remove clots within the brain.

Telestroke technology brings together electronic medical information, clinical assessment tools, laboratory data, emergency department personnel and neurological experts to provide state-of-the-art stroke care to more people.

When you suspect a stroke, call 911.

Understanding the symptoms of a stroke and seeking prompt medical treatment is vital to recovery for stroke patients. Remembering the acronym F.A.S.T. can help you recognize the signs of a stroke. It stands for Face, Arm, Speech and Time.

Face: Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?

Arms: Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one drift downward?

Speech: Have the person repeat a simple phrase. Does the speech sound slurred or strange?

Time: Act quickly. If you observe any of these symptoms, the person may be experiencing a stroke — even if the symptoms disappear after a few minutes. Get them immediately to the nearest emergency department.

Other symptoms of stroke include loss of vision, severe headache or sudden dizziness.

Telestroke technology offers advanced stroke care, can eliminate delays in assessment and offer more comprehensive care — when time is of the essence.

To learn more about the resources available at Aurora Medical Center in Washington County or an Aurora facility near you, visit Aurora.org/FindMyDoctor or call 888-863-5502.

ACE Tracker from page 2

Public Health, and Ellen Danto-Nocton, MD, a geriatrician, have developed a checklist that sums up those concepts. The checklist includes tasks like verifying the patient’s history with his or her family and the nursing staff, assessing for pain and comparing the patient’s medications with what he or she was taking when admitted. Other tasks include asking whether the patient’s problems could be caused by his or her prescriptions, checking whether the patient is being given a multi-vitamin and communicating with the family.

Aurora’s geriatricians don’t look for a high-tech solution. They instead are distributing the checklist on small notecards. “The ACE Tracker software shows that electronic health records can be used to help spread the geriatric model of care to all elderly patients,” Malone says. But he doesn’t dismiss the notecards.

What would happen if doctors, nurses and other health care providers followed this relatively simple checklist? “You would have a safer hospital system for vulnerable elders,” says Malone.

To learn how you can support these efforts, contact the Aurora Health Care Foundation at 877-460-8370.
Finding help fast is key to supporting family caregivers

Caring for an elderly or disabled family member or friend can be rewarding – but it can also be a physical, emotional and financial challenge. With one in three people nationwide providing an average of 20 hours per week of care, in addition to work and family obligations, it’s easy to understand why many caregivers find themselves driven to the breaking point.

To help family caregivers find support, Wisconsin’s Area Agencies on Aging have launched a website and toll-free phone number that quickly connects caregivers to local resources in any county or tribe in Wisconsin.

“We know that help isn’t always easy to find, especially when family members don’t live in the same community or even the same state as their loved one who needs care,” says Pat Bruce, director of the Family Caregiver Support Network at Interfaith Older Adult Programs in Milwaukee. “Caregivers who visit the site or call the toll-free number are connected to program specialists who provide free information and assistance on local services, such as adult day care, case management, home health and personal care, respite care, financial and legal matters related to caregiving, home-delivered meals, transportation and more.”

Anyone directly caring for or concerned about the well-being of someone over age 60 or someone with Alzheimer’s disease or a related disorder can find their county or tribal Family Caregiver Support Program by calling 866-843-9810, or visit wisconsincaregiver.org.

The program also serves grandparents or relative caregivers age 55 years and older who are caring for children under age 19, or who are caring for a relative with a disability who is age 19 to 59.

Save the date!

5th Annual Caring for the Caregiver
Saturday, November 19, 2011

Keynote Speaker
Lynda Markut
Workplace Education Coordinator, Alzheimer’s Association

Join us for solutions to common challenges faced by today’s caregivers. Learn how caregiving can have an effect on you and the steps you should take to care for yourself as you care for someone else.

For more information or to register, call the Family Caregiver Support Network at 414-220-8600.

Stop the flu from page 1

Who should not get a flu shot?
In general, you should not get a flu shot if you:
• Have a severe allergy to eggs or other parts of the vaccine
• Currently have a major illness with a fever

Talk with your doctor if you have questions or if you think there are other reasons you should not get a flu shot.

Can I get the FluMist vaccine?
FluMist is a live but weakened vaccine given as a nasal spray. At this time, FluMist is an option for family members under age 50.

What else can I do to help prevent the flu?
In addition to getting your flu shot, you can:
• Keep yourself healthy – get plenty of sleep, eat a well-balanced diet, be physically active and manage your stress.
• Avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you are sick, keep your distance from others.
• Prevent the spread of germs by covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
• Wash your hands often.
• Talk to your doctor if you think you might have the flu. Flu symptoms may include fever, sudden headache, severe muscle aches, tiredness, weakness and cough.

To find out where to get your flu shot, ask your doctor or see the sidebar information on page 1 for Aurora’s Shoo the Flu & Pneumonia Too! community clinics.
Volunteer hairdresser opportunities

Volunteer hair stylists are needed at Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center to offer hairwashing and styling to our patients. This is a great opportunity for student or retired hair stylists to share your talents. Training and supplies will be provided. For more information call 414-649-7022.

Restless legs from page 2

In most cases, it is difficult to determine the exact cause of RLS. Research has linked RLS to heredity and pregnancy. Although RLS is not a cause of any serious medical problem, conditions such as iron deficiency, diabetes, kidney failure, Parkinson disease and rheumatoid arthritis have been associated with RLS.

For many people, discussing their symptoms with a health care provider is difficult. It is often hard to describe the exact sensation they feel and they may not consider their condition as a medical issue. If you are concerned about your symptoms, your doctor may suggest a complete physical exam, a review of family and medical history, a review of medications and a review of your sleeping patterns. Lab tests may also be recommended in order to rule out other conditions and identify iron deficiencies. RLS is diagnosed when a patient meets the four specific criteria established by the International Restless Legs Syndrome Study Group:
- A patient experiences a strong or overwhelming urge to move the affected limb(s)
- Symptoms are worse at night

- Symptoms are triggered by rest, relaxation or sleep
- Symptoms are relieved with movement or activity

Because RLS commonly affects a person's ability to sleep, many people are referred to a sleep specialist. Although an overnight sleep study is usually not required, these specialists can help patients manage their symptoms to avoid complications associated with sleep deprivation.

RLS can often be controlled by finding and managing underlying conditions, such as iron deficiency or diabetes. Lifestyle modifications also may help with mild RLS symptoms. Reducing alcohol, caffeine and tobacco use, regulating sleep patterns, engaging in moderate exercise, massaging your legs and using heat or ice therapy can offer some relief. Medications are available to control RLS, thereby minimizing symptoms and improving the quality of sleep.

For more information on how Restless Legs Syndrome may be affecting your sleep patterns and overall health, or to find a location of an Aurora Sleep Medicine Center near you, visit Aurora.org/Sleep.