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SAINT PETER'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

Treating you better...for life.

Vaccines Against Childhood Illnesses Remain Critically Important

WELL CARE IS THE CORNERSTONE OF PEDIATRIC MEDICINE

Mumps, rubella, whooping cough and other diseases may seem like childhood illnesses of old. Thanks to vaccines, many of these potentially fatal diseases are rare. However, as evidenced by multiple measles outbreaks in the U.S. in the past few years, failure to immunize newborns against these diseases can have serious consequences.

In fact, pediatricians are extremely concerned, during the height of the COVID-19's stay-at-home orders, that there was a dramatic decline in childhood well-visits and vaccinations. This concern has been documented by the American Academy of Pediatrics, as well as the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

The pediatric primary and specialty care practices of The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's University Hospital remained open and continued seeing patients throughout the height of the pandemic. Pediatricians continually reached out to patient families, especially parents of newborns, and were able to maintain upward of 75 percent of necessary well-care visits, in the past few months, noted David Jaipersaud, executive director of Saint Peter's Children's Hospital.



However, pediatricians including Michael Lucas, MD, FAAP, and medical director of the Pediatric Faculty Group at Saint Peter's University Hospital, remain concerned. He said the result of families not following recommended immunization protocols could become a huge global health crisis.

"Vaccines help keep children safe from so many diseases that are active and can have devastating effects," he explained. "Even though right now there is a heavy focus on the coronavirus, vaccinations against childhood illnesses remain critically important. These diseases are very real and can put children in the hospital. As a pediatrician, I know how important protecting these children is, not only for themselves but for our entire public health system."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has already identified the recent decrease in vaccinations during COVID-19 as a "major public health threat."

"If we lapse on vaccinations," added Dr. Lucas, "we will have a large group of kids who are unvaccinated against these illnesses and there could be major resurgences of diseases we thought were dormant."

Additionally, well visits are incredibly important for infants – far beyond necessary vaccinations. "Well care is the cornerstone of pediatric medicine," said Dr. Lucas. "We use well-care visits to offer guidance for families about what to expect as their child is going through different stages of development."

During routine well-care visits, pediatricians are able to monitor the child's growth and development. Milestones such as weight, head circumference and length are monitored so any concerns can be identified and managed appropriately.

"The reason why we have a routine child well-visit schedule that we follow is because things are happening during infancy and toddler years that are changing on a month-to-month basis," Dr. Lucas explained. "It's important to pick up those changes – either in a good way or in a way we don't like."

If a child is not growing according to schedule or not meeting developmental milestones on time, such as motor skills, rolling over, sitting, crawling, etc., it can be noted early.

"The faster we see those things, like if the child isn't growing correctly or meeting milestones, the faster we can intervene, speak to the parents and do something so it doesn't become a major issue for the child."

Parents of newborns and toddlers are urged to continue to see their pediatricians on a regular schedule to ensure optimum health. Don't put off important vaccinations or well-care visits. To find a pediatrician associated with The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's University Hospital please call 855.SP.MY.DOC (855.776.9632) or visit saintpetershcs.com/findaphysician.

Saint Peter's Pediatric Specialty Practices Resume In-Person Services

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, most Saint Peter's pediatric specialists were using technology to stay in touch with their patients, explained David Jaipersaud, executive director of The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's University Hospital.

Due to stay-at-home orders and social distancing guidelines, most of the pediatric medical specialists were relying on telemedicine until in-person visits resumed fully. Some specialties, including pediatric oncology, were seeing patients in person throughout the crisis.

"During the pandemic, we saw an absolute slowdown in visits because of the stay-at-home orders," said Jaipersaud. "During that time, however, we also expanded the Pediatric Specialties Unit to the Zullo Building, across the street from the main Children's Hospital. Now that we are fully open again, our patients and their families will be able to take advantage of our new location."

Developmental Pediatrics, Adolescent Medicine, Allergy and Immunology and a Pediatric Sleep Program are now housed in the Zullo Building. The move has been in the works for the past year.

"This is a reflection of the evolution and growth of our pediatric specialty programs at The Children's Hospital," the executive director said. "This is an exciting time for us. We are eager to offer the community a full, but expanded, range of services that we have always provided."

Pediatric specialty services can be found at these locations:

Saint Peter's University Hospital's Medical Office Building,

254 Easton Avenue, New Brunswick

Pediatric Hematology Oncology, Pediatric Neurology, Pediatric Gastroenterology, Pediatric Endocrinology, Pediatric Orthopedics, Pediatric Pulmonology, Craniofacial and Neurosurgery, Neonatal Follow-up, Retinopathy and Apnea Clinic

Zullo Building, 7 Wirt Street, New Brunswick

Pediatric Sleep, Developmental Pediatrics, Adolescent Medicine, Allergy and Immunology and Pediatric Infectious Diseases

Saint Peter's Family Health Center, 123 How Lane, New Brunswick

Primary and specialty care

562 Easton Avenue, Somerset

Pediatric Nephrology

**1802 Oak Tree Road, Edison;
303 West Main Street, Freehold;
and 5 Marine View Plaza, Hoboken**
Specialty care

To learn more about The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's University Hospital, call 732-565-KIDS (5437) or visit saintpetershcs.com/childrenshospital.

Saint Peter's: Safely Treating You Better for Life

At Saint Peter's Healthcare System, safety is our highest priority, said Kim Simon, MSN, CIC, FAPIC, director of Infection Prevention. "Cleanliness leads to safety. Safety leads to reduced infections."

When Simon joined Saint Peter's on January 2, with more than 20 years of infection prevention experience, she had no idea the COVID-19 pandemic was about to cast a spotlight on hospital safety procedures. However, the collaboration between Saint Peter's Infection Prevention and Environmental Services (EVS) departments, she said, assured the highest level of sanitation and safety possible before, during and after the height of the pandemic.

When state-mandated restrictions on elective surgeries and outpatient procedures were lifted, Saint Peter's resumed these services – but not before readying the hospital and outpatient areas to ensure the safety of our patients, staff and physicians.

The Environmental Services team, under the guidance of Darrie Washington, director of Environmental Services, completed an enhanced cleaning process in all hospital patient care units that had been used exclusively to care for COVID-19 patients. The process included use of a Xenex LightStrike™ Germ-Zapping™ Robot (pictured) that emits waves of ultraviolet (UV) light to destroy germs in hard-to-clean places.

In addition, the cleaning process included removing and washing bed curtains, cleaning and fogging ceiling vents, ductwork and heating and cooling wall units, and the cleaning of floors and high-touch areas. Lastly, a chemical disinfectant misting of the entire area and everything in it was



Saint Peter's Sterile Processing Department (SPD)/Central Services played a key role in ensuring the safety of our patients, employees and physicians during the fight against COVID-19.

performed prior to the application of a chemical barrier on high-touch areas, such as door knobs and switches.

To help generate awareness about how hospitals and businesses are responding to the pandemic, Middlesex County launched a public service campaign to express appreciation to those essential workers who are ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of county residents.

The campaign recognized the Saint Peter's Environmental Services team noting that EVS employees are essential workers. The team is being prominently featured in this new commercial and digital campaign for its efforts in "helping to keep things clean and safe."

"I couldn't be prouder of my EVS team and how they have handled this pandemic. They performed their jobs as well trained professionals with fearlessness. That is what EVS is all about," Washington said.

Additionally, the Saint Peter's Engineering and Project Management Department (or Facilities as it is widely known), led by Director Andrew Schober, PMP, did a tremendous job in setting up temporary negative pressure rooms with portable HEPA filtration units and monitoring air flows to ensure patient and staff safety with regards to COVID patients who required airborne precautions for their care, Simon said.

Of course, Saint Peter's continues to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidelines on infection prevention in the hospital, emergency department and outpatient areas, including Saint Peter's Physician Associates practices, where children and adults are being scheduled for in-person well care, sick care and specialty care visits.

The Saint Peter's healthcare team is ready to serve our community.

Updates about our services, visitor guidelines and more can be found at www.saintpetershcs.com.

Community Calendar

For more information or to register for a program, call the contact number listed or visit saintpetershcs.com/Events. Most programs are **FREE** unless noted; please call for information.

Cancer Support

- Bone Marrow Transplant**
For patients who have had an allogeneic transplant
Call for information: 732.235.8522
- Breast Cancer**
Call for information: 732.235.7011
- Gynecologic Cancer**
In partnership with the Cancer Support Community Central New Jersey
Call for information: 732.235.6792
- Living with Cancer**
Call for information: 732.235.7557

Support Groups

- Bariatric**
Call for information: 732.339.7450
- Bereavement**
Call Pastoral Care for information: 732.745.8565
- SHARE** (for those who have suffered miscarriage)
Call for information: 732.745.8522
- Craniofacial Teen Girls**
Call for information: 732.745.8600, x8113
- MyGoal Autism Family**
Call for information: 877.886.9462
- Spouse/Partner Caregiver**
Call for information: 732.745.8600, x8662

Diabetes Education*

- For more information about the following classes, please call the phone numbers listed below.
- Diabetes Self-Management Education**
Call for information: 732.339.7630
 - Gestational Diabetes Self-Management Education**
Call for information: 732.339.7630
 - Type I Diabetes Support Group for Children and Their Families**
Call for information: 732.745.8600, x8610

Parent Education Parenting classes are currently being held online. Register at saintpetershcs.com/Services/Parent-Education. Once registered for a class, access information will be provided to you.

For information about the following classes, please call Parent Education at 732.745.8579

- Baby Care**
- Birth Center Class** (for moms under midwifery care)
- Breastfeeding Class**
- Breastfeeding Support Group**

- Grandparents Class**
- Hypnobirthing**
- Marvelous Multiples**
- New Daddy Class**

- New Mom Support Group**
- Prenatal Yoga & Exercise Class**
- Prepared Childbirth/Lamaze Classes**
- Sibling Class**

Need a doctor? To find a Saint Peter's physician, call 1.855.SP.MY.DOC (1.855.776.9362).
Also available, online scheduling with select Saint Peter's Healthcare System physicians via Zocdoc at BookMySPDoc.com
This calendar is for information only. Do not rely on it to make healthcare decisions on your own; instead, talk with your healthcare provider for advice and treatment. Do not ignore medical advice or delay seeking it because of something you read here. We do not suggest or endorse that you have any tests, use products, or use other information in this document without advice from your healthcare provider.



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