

# 2014

## REVIEW

### MARCH



# Your Partner in Health

## A practical way to keep the flu away and fun & fitness for kids

As we “March forward”, and look forward to warmer weather, we at Port Huron Hospital want to remind you that we’re still in the midst of influenza season – and it has been particularly widespread this year. As we fight influenza this year, we look to our community to help stop the spread of infection. We all know about the importance of getting the flu vaccine each year, but another very powerful weapon worth discussion is proper hand hygiene.

We also want to get you ready for an annual March activity marking its 25<sup>th</sup> year at Port Huron Hospital. Our annual Fun and Fitness Festival brings a healthy message to kids in a fun, interactive environment.

Plan to join us March 29 for fun with ambulance tours, a “Visit to the Operating Room,” pet therapy, fitness obstacle course and free raffles for a bicycle. It can be our “secret” that kids are learning about health and fitness while they’re having fun!

*Thomas DeFauw, President and Chief Executive Officer*

## Give a “hand” in curbing infection and virus

**Influenza has hit hard this year**, and the season is not over as it continues through April and early May. This year, Port Huron Hospital has seen a number of people hospitalized with influenza. It’s been particularly prevalent in adults, ages 18-49 years, which, according to Sharon Kortas RN, certified infection control practitioner, coincides with those who are statistically least likely to get the influenza vaccine. Sharon reports that St. Clair County residents have one of the

Hand hygiene is one of the best ways to prevent infections.



lowest influenza vaccination rates in Michigan, at only 12.3 percent. Of course, the best advice is to get the vaccination, but equally important is to practice proper hand hygiene.

“Aside from vaccination, the number one way to prevent infection is hand hygiene,” says Sharon. “Influenza droplets can be visualized like bubbles – they travel in the air 3-6 feet and land in the mouth and nose or on surfaces and splatter. When we touch these surfaces, we spread infections.”

Sharon joins the Centers for Disease Control in recommending the following. Always wash hands:

- Before preparing food and eating
- After using the bathroom
- When hands are visibly soiled

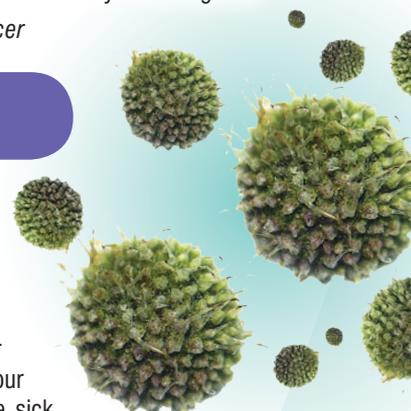
Alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used between hand washing.

“Proper towel hygiene is also important. Families share a similar flora (set of bacteria), so it’s generally okay for families to share a hand towel. Bath towels should always be separate for each family member,” says Sharon. She also recommends:

- Washing and changing family hand towels frequently.
- Giving a sick family member a dedicated towel to use.
- Changing towels before and after guests use them (they introduce new flora to the household).
- Washing and drying towels in the hottest temperature allowed for the fabric.

Finally, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth –

where germs can enter the body and cause infection. When you blow your nose, cough or sneeze; wash your hands. “If you are sick, stay home from work, and please don’t visit those in the hospital,” says Sharon. “Many of us feel indispensable, but it’s not worth risking serious infection when we can use simple precautions.”



## FUN & FITNESS FESTIVAL - 25<sup>th</sup> YEAR



**Location: Port Huron Hospital**

**Date: March 29, 2013**

**Registration time: 9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

**Event closes at 1 p.m.**

Children from 5-11 years, who are accompanied by an adult, can experience the hospital environment in a way that is fun and active, while they get interested in their health and fitness.

For more information, visit [www.porthuronhospital.org/fun](http://www.porthuronhospital.org/fun) or call HealthAccess at 1-800-228-1484.



For more information, please visit or contact us at:

1221 Pine Grove Avenue, Port Huron, Michigan 48060

1.800.228.1484 or [www.porthuronhospital.org](http://www.porthuronhospital.org)