

WHAT'S HAPPENING

A newsletter for the Maine Medical Center family

Raising Readers Celebrates Distribution of its 3 Millionth Book

Raising Readers presented its 3 millionth book to 5-year-old triplets during a special event at The Barbara Bush Children's Hospital at Maine Medical Center.

It has been 20 years since Raising Readers began distributing books – free of charge – to every Maine child between the ages of birth and 5 through partnerships with hospitals, medical practices and health care providers. Raising Readers is led and administered by MaineHealth in collaboration with Northern Light Health and with support from The Barbara Bush Children's Hospital at Maine Medical Center. The program has been fully funded by the Libra Foundation since its inception.



Maine Medical Partners Pediatric Clinic patients, Zabrah, Yousif and Howrah (left to right), received the 3 millionth book from Raising Readers on Wednesday, Jan. 29.

“Raising Readers reaches every child receiving well-child care in Maine. It’s be-

come a part of growing up in Maine,” said MaineHealth CEO Bill Caron.

“We are grateful for the Libra Foundation’s ongoing and generous support of this vibrant and beloved program.”

The 5-year-old triplets, Howrah, Yousif and Zahra, have been patients at the Maine Medical Partners Pediatric Clinic since they were born. Their pediatrician, Stephen DiGiovanni, M.D., presented each of them with a copy of “Baabwaa and Wooliam,” by David Elliott and Maine illustrator Melissa Sweet. The book is one of the Raising Readers selections for 5-year-olds this year.

Raising Readers has given books to approximately 290,000 Maine children since 2000.

Flu FAQ with Hospital Epidemiologist August Valenti, M.D.

Every year, we receive a lot of questions about the severity of the flu season and the best ways to protect yourself. Maine Medical Center’s care teams receive regular updates from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) about the flu and follow evidence-based

protocols to prevent spread of the disease. Maine Medical Center’s Hospital Epidemiologist, August Valenti, M.D., answers some of our most frequently asked questions about this year’s flu season.

How bad is this year’s flu season?

Maine is in the midst of a busy flu season, and is so far busier than last season. The Maine CDC is recommending everyone over the age of 6 months be vaccinated against the flu.

Is this year’s flu vaccine effective?

The effectiveness of the flu vaccine varies from year to year, but vaccination is always your best defense against flu.

Flu FAQ’

Continued on back

MMC Is Prepared for Potential Coronavirus

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is monitoring an outbreak of coronavirus that began in China in December. Coronaviruses are a group of viruses that typically cause mild respiratory disease, similar to a cold. However, in their more severe forms, coronaviruses can lead to pneumonia and even death.

This particular coronavirus, 2019-nCoV, has led to severe illness and death in some people. Those at most risk include the elderly and those with underlying

health issues or compromised immune systems. Most cases of this recent coronavirus have been reported in Asia. There also have been some reported cases in the United States.

As of the end of January, there had been no reported cases in Maine. However, Maine Medical Center has a plan in place and is prepared to both screen patients and respond to cases of coronavirus.

The CDC has issued a travel advisory for people planning to

visit China, warning them to avoid contact with people who are sick, as well as animals and animal markets. The agency also reminds everyone to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water. Older travelers and those with underlying health issues should consult with their healthcare provider as to whether they should travel to Wuhan.

The CDC reports that travelers coming to the U.S. from China may undergo a health screening and those with flu-

like symptoms may have an additional health assessment. If you have recently returned from China and feel sick with a fever, cough or difficulty breathing, call your health care provider and tell them about your recent travel and symptoms. The CDC also recommends you avoid contact with others, wash your hands frequently with soap and water, and cough or sneeze into your sleeve or a tissue, not your hands.

For more information, visit cdc.gov/coronavirus.

'Flu FAQ'

Continued from front

Is it too late to get the flu shot?
Absolutely not. The Maine CDC continues to recommend everyone over the age of 6 months be vaccinated against the flu if they haven't been already. Getting your flu shot now ensures that you will be better protected for the rest of flu season.

What can I do to prevent the spread of flu?

- Vaccination remains the best protection against the flu
- Practice good hand hygiene:
 - Wash your hands frequently and use hand sanitizer
 - Keep your hands away from your face
 - Sneeze into a tissue, then throw it away immediately and wash your hands
 - If tissues aren't available, sneeze into your elbow
- Stay home if you're sick
- Wipe down work place surfaces and equipment regularly, especially if someone you know has been sick has visited
- Get plenty of sleep

Clean your hands

When you are visiting
When you are leaving

The Solution is in Our Hands
Clean hands end the spread of germs