



Medical Home

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Children's HealthCare Associates
www.chahealth.net

MEDICAL HOME TEAM

Dr. Mark Rosenberg
Dr. Ken Lyons
Joyce McDevitt
Debbie Rosenblum
Holli Swan
Ellen Wagner
Karen Hitzeman
Rita Klemm

New Practice Website

Within the next month, CHA will launch a new, improved practice website. The website will provide links to the American Academy of Pediatrics site that parents can use to access information about topics such as diagnoses and treatments, developmental expectations, and vaccines. The website will also be able to provide information to parents regarding home management of an ill child (what to do about fevers, when a child needs to be seen by a physician for a certain symptom, etc.) The site will also have a Medical Home section that will include links to Emergency Information Forms and school health forms.

Attention: Parents of Children with Special Health Care Needs!

Next Support Group
Meeting
Wednesday, January 10
6:30 p.m.
Lincoln Park Office.
Parking is available.
Please RSVP to Debbie at
ext. 132

Medical Home Parent Meeting

In August, the CHA Medical Home launched the first in a series of parent group meetings. The focus of this meeting was to allow parents of children with special health care needs to meet and to share their experiences with one another. Those in attendance were very enthusiastic about the opportunity to share their thoughts and to start building a support group network. With parental input from these meetings, CHA will also be able to aid in patient care through quality improvement. The next such meeting is scheduled for Wednesday night, January 10 at 6:30pm. The format of this meeting will be similar to the last - an informal, open discussion for parents. However, there is discussion about having speakers at future meetings.

A Love Story.....
 I will seek and find
 you....I shall take you to
 bed. I will make you
 ache, shake and sweat.
 I will exhaust you to
 the point that you will
 be relieved when I'm
 finished, you will be
 weak for days. All My
 Love,

The Flu

Influenza

By Holli Swan

What is Influenza (Also called flu)?

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by the influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death.

Symptoms of the flu are like a cold but more severe.

How Flu Spreads

Flu viruses spread mainly from person to person through coughing and sneezing of people with influenza. It also can be spread by touching something with the flu virus on it and then touching their mouth or nose.

When to get Vaccinated

October or November is the best time to get vaccinated, but getting vaccinated in December or later is still beneficial since most influenza activity occurs in January or later.

Kids Who Should get Vaccinated

In general, anyone who wants to reduce their chances of getting the flu should get vaccinated.

Prevention of the Flu: Get vaccinated

Family Service of the Month

CHA's family service of the month is Jackie's Toy Chest, based out of Children's Memorial Hospital in Lincoln Park. Jackie's Toy Chest is a Lekotek Center, a place that uses family-centered play to bring together families of children with special needs in an environment of failure-free learning as well as a toy library and developmental education program. It features individualized and small group play sessions for children with disabilities and special needs using developmentally appropriate toys and equipment.

Trained Lekotek leaders can tailor play sessions to the specific needs of each patient and family as well as make referrals to special needs programs and services. A resource library and information for caregivers of children with special needs is also available. For more information call. 773-327-2340.

Parent's Perspective

by Karen Hitzeman

When I agreed/volunteered (still debating what happened there) to write this article, I was in a really good place. I was having a solid good 2 weeks of hopefulness and acceptance of dealing with my physically disabled child. I thought maybe I could offer some insight or words of encouragement to parents who have just learned about their child's issue, whatever it may be. As I write today, I am slowly coming out of a week of full-blown depression and a night of tears in my pillow about the whole thing. Of course, I'm sure this is normal for parents of children with disabilities. My son is only 19 months old so I know I have much to learn about both coping with and addressing the myriad complexities that come along with raising a special needs child. One thing I am fairly certain of is that these waves of emotions will come and go for the rest of my life.

The specific assignment for this article was to write about what it's like when you first learn that you have a special needs child. That is somewhat easy, because I remember absolutely everything about that moment -- the exact date, time, who was in the room, even what I was wearing when the doctor said, "I'm sorry, but one of your children is brain damaged." (One month prior to the doctor's proclamation, I had given birth to twins 2 ½ months prematurely.) Ironically, I remember very little about the details that followed. I just remember being in shock and not understanding what it all meant. Even now, I am just beginning to get the real gist of what it really means to raise a special needs child.

At the time, because Joey was only a month old, no signs of the brain damage, formally known as periventricular leukomalasia, were physically present. All we had to go on was this diagnosis and the neurologist's prediction that his case was "moderate to severe." We were also told that this brain damage would likely manifest as cerebral palsy and by the time Joey was 4 months, we could see this to be true. Those first 4 months of Joey's life were at the same time the hardest and the easiest. Because we could see nothing, we were cautiously filled with hope, but we lived in fear of the day that the cp would become more apparent. Well, that day has come and gone, and we, in many ways, find ourselves at the same place we were at the very beginning -filled with cautious hopefulness.

As time goes on, we are learning to fully appreciate how life-altering this experience is. The time commitment involved in the many accompanying medical issues and the daily therapy sessions are just a two things that have taken some serious adjustment. Most important, though, is the overall impact having a special needs child has on the entire family unit. Both of Joey's siblings have had to make a great deal of adjustments as well and we all continue to change and grow together.

Reading Corner

Here are a couple of suggested books for parents of Children with Special Health Care Needs

"Could it be Autism?" by Nancy Wiseman

"The Child with Special Needs" by Stanley Greenspan

**Check out the new
Practice Website
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