



# Clinic CloseUp

News from your McFarland Clinic Webster City Physicians | Fall 2009

## *H1N1 and Seasonal Flu*

### *What You Need to Know*

This year there is heightened awareness around the flu. The outbreak of the H1N1 virus this past spring has made people more aware of the complications of having the flu. The CDC has developed the vaccine for the 2009-2010 seasonal flu and for the H1N1 flu.

#### **How do I know if I have the flu?**

You may have the flu if you have some or all of these symptoms:

- fever \*
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- body aches
- headache
- chills
- fatigue
- sometimes diarrhea and vomiting

\*It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.

#### **How is H1N1 different from seasonal influenza?**

Seasonal flu viruses change from year to year, but they are closely related to each other. The H1N1 flu is a new flu virus. It is very different from seasonal flu viruses. Most people have little or no immunity to the H1N1 flu because their bodies are not prepared to fight off the virus. Where as with seasonal flu people who have had flu infections in the past usually have some immunity because their bodies have built up some ability to fight off the seasonal virus.

#### **What to do if you get sick:**

If you get sick with flu-like symptoms, you should stay home and avoid contact with other people except to get medical care. Most people with 2009 H1N1 have had mild illness and have not needed medical care or antiviral drugs and the same is true of seasonal flu. If you get sick with flu symptoms and are at high risk of flu complications or you are concerned about your illness, call your health care provider for advice.

CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone, your fever should be gone without the use of fever-reducing medicine.

#### **What are the emergency warning signs:**

##### In children:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids

- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

##### In adults:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

The emergency room should be used for people who are very sick.

You should not go to the emergency room if you are only mildly ill. If you have the emergency warning signs of flu sickness, you should go to the emergency room.

#### **When to get vaccinated for H1N1 and seasonal influenza:**

##### **H1N1 Influenza:**

People should get vaccinated as soon as the vaccine is available. Please call Hamilton County Public Health at (515) 832-9565.

##### **Seasonal Influenza:**

For more information regarding seasonal influenza vaccine please call your primary care provider.



# Eyes: Disorders, Symptoms and Treatment

Receiving routine eye exams or screening can detect damage to the eye before a patient visually or physically notices any changes. If caught early enough, treatment usually helps several common eye disorders and problems.

Dr. Nicolas Hamouche, a McFarland Clinic Ophthalmologist, explains why it is important for a patient to receive routine eye exams and provides information about three common eye disorders.



Nicolas Hamouche, MD

## Diabetic Retinopathy

“Diabetic retinopathy is the most common cause of vision loss in working Americans,” said Dr. Hamouche, “Everyone with diabetes needs to have a complete eye exam on a yearly basis because the earlier the retinopathy is detected the easier the treatment and the better the outcome.”

Diabetic retinopathy happens when diabetes damages the blood vessels inside the retina. During the early

stages, patients may not know or present any symptoms, placing an added emphasis on having a yearly retinal exam.

If you have diabetes the only way to prevent diabetic retinopathy is to have good control of your blood sugar, blood pressure as well as blood lipids. Hence, diabetic care becomes a team effort between the patient, the ophthalmologist and the primary care physician.

Because symptoms may not be experienced, an ophthalmologist can detect any significant changes or advancements of the disease during a routine eye exam and can recommend treatment.

## Signs and Symptoms of Diabetic Retinopathy:

- Blurry or double vision
- Dark or floating spots
- Rings, flashing lights or black spots
- Pain or pressure in the eye

Treatment is determined based on how early (or late) the condition is diagnosed. The earlier the disease is diagnosed, the more likely vision can be saved. Treatment options include laser treatment, drug injections in the eye and surgery.

## Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a disease of the optic nerve of the eye that is usually, but not always, associated with elevated intraocular pressure. In its more common form, open angle glaucoma, the condition progresses gradually and ‘silently’ so that loss of vision is not noticed until the disease is at an advanced stage. Closed angle glaucoma can occur with an acute attack; it is painful and less common.

Glaucoma is caused by a pressure build up in the eye. The pressure is from a buildup of a fluid that is constantly produced in the front segment of the eye. This fluid is called aqueous humor, and it normally leaves the eye through a drainage system. The pressure builds up when the fluid cannot drain out of the eye at a normal rate.

“You are at higher risk if you have a family history of glaucoma, if you have diabetes, if you are significantly near sighted or take specific medications such as prednisone or other forms of cortisone. It is a slow progressing disease, making it important to get routine eye exams,” stated Dr. Hamouche.

## Signs and Symptoms of Glaucoma:

### Open Angle:

- Gradual loss of peripheral vision
- Tunnel vision in advanced stages

### Closed Angle:

- Severe eye pain
- Blurred vision
- Sudden onset of visual problems
- Reddening of the eye
- Nausea and vomiting
- Halos around lights

Treatment typically starts with the use of medicated eye drops. If the eye drops are not enough to reduce the eye pressure then laser or ‘cutting’ surgery will need to be performed. Like in diabetes, the earlier the diagnosis of glaucoma, the easier and more successful the treatment.

## Cataract

Cataracts occur when the clear lens of the eye becomes cloudy. People over the age of 50 are more prone to have a cataract. The haziness of the vision develops slowly and may not change your eyesight in the beginning. However, once the cataract has

# Early Detection is Key in Fighting Breast Cancer

The American Cancer Society estimates that in 2009, there will be 192,370 new cases of invasive breast cancer diagnosed. Of those new cases, 40,170 people will die from breast cancer.

Other than skin cancer, breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in the United States. After lung cancer, it is the second leading cause of cancer death in women.

A woman has a one in eight chance of having invasive breast cancer and a one in 35 chance of dying from breast cancer. New technologies to find the cancer earlier and improved treatments are credited to the breast cancer death rate declining.

Early detection of the cancer is a very important aspect of successful treatment. The following are guidelines from the American Cancer Society to help you detect breast cancer early.

## ***Mammogram:***

Women age 40 and older should have a screening mammogram every year and should continue to do so for as long as they are in good health. If breast cancer runs in your family you are encouraged to talk to your primary care provider to discuss when and how often a mammogram should be received.

## ***Clinic Breast Exam:***

Women in their 20s and 30s should have a clinical breast exam (CBE) as part of a regular exam or annual physical by a health care provider, at least every 3 years. After age 40, women should have a breast exam by a health care provider every year.

## ***Breast Self Exam:***

Beginning in their 20s, women should complete a breast self exam (BSE) every month. When performing a self exam, women should look for lumps, thickening and dimples in the breast. Checking for lumps in the underarms and discharge in the nipple is also a step in the breast self exam.

## **Schedule Your Next Mammogram:**

To schedule your next screening mammogram appointment, please call the McFarland Clinic Webster City office at (515) 832-6700.



# *E-Prescriptions at McFarland Clinic*

With the implementation of the Electronic Medical Record (EMR), McFarland Clinic is now sending prescriptions electronically to pharmacies. E-prescribing can lead to greater convenience for patients through an even safer and more efficient prescribing process.

E-prescriptions are computer-generated prescriptions created by your health care provider and sent directly to your pharmacy.

## **The benefits of E-prescriptions are:**

- **Fast-** Your prescription arrives at your pharmacy before you leave your provider's office.
- **Convenient-** You don't have to make that extra trip to drop off your prescription at the pharmacy.
- **Legible-** There is no handwriting for the pharmacist to interpret.
- **Secure & Private-** Prescription requests arrive safe and secure at your chosen pharmacy. It can't be lost, misplaced, get into the

hands of another person. E-prescribing complies with federal privacy law, HIPAA, as well as state laws.

- **Medication Alerts-** McFarland's electronic medical record makes it easier for your provider to access a list of your medications. Technology can alert them to potential problems such as a drug allergy when e-prescribing.

As a patient all you need to do is simply inform your physician of the pharmacy and location of choice for filling your medication requests.



## New Osteoarthritis

### Research Study Available

Dr. Gerbracht, McFarland Clinic Rheumatology, is actively enrolling patients in a new osteoarthritis research study.

The study is researching an investigational drug, for the relief of signs and symptoms of osteoarthritis of the knee, alone or in combination with Non-Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs). This 28 week research study is for patients with signs and symptoms of moderate to severe osteoarthritis of the knee.

#### Participants in the study receive at no cost:

- Study-related health evaluations, physical exams and osteoarthritis assessments
- Study medications
- Educational materials for osteoarthritis

#### How to participate:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Have a diagnosis of osteoarthritis of the knee
- Be willing to stop all pain medications for osteoarthritis, once directed by physician

Dr. Gerbracht's office is one of 100 sites across the United States certified to conduct this study.

Interested participants should contact the McFarland Clinic Clinical Research Department at (515) 956-4159 for more information.

To learn about other studies, call the McFarland Clinic Clinical Research Department at (515) 956-4159 or visit our Web site at [mcfarlandclinic.com](http://mcfarlandclinic.com).

## McFARLAND CLINIC WEBSTER CITY PROVIDERS

#### Family Medicine

Pierre Bernard, DO  
David Hagedorn, DO  
Sharon Mullis, DO  
Sheila Bryan, PA-C

#### Gerontology

Wendy Paca, ARNP, GNP

#### Physical Therapy

Danielle Kohl, DPT  
Jessica Hnriczek, DPT

#### Visiting Specialists

#### Allergy

Edward Nassif, MD

#### Cardiology

Stuart Christenson, MD

#### Neurology

Michael Kitchell, MD  
David Moore, MD  
Selden Spencer, MD

#### Neurosurgery

Gregory Brandenburg, MD

#### Occupational Medicine

Charles Mooney, MD, MPH

#### Oncology & Hematology

(William R. Bliss Cancer Center)

Larry Otteman, MD

#### Ophthalmology

Nicolas Hamouche

#### Orthopedic Surgery/Sports Medicine

David Sneller, MD

#### Otolaryngology (ENT)

Stephen Griffith, MD  
Kevin Prater, PA-C

#### Podiatry

Charles Gilarski, DPM

#### Pulmonology

Steven Wanzek, MD

#### Radiation Oncology

(William R. Bliss Cancer Center)

Gregory Yee, MD  
Joseph Rhodes, MD

#### Surgery

Mark Vandenberg, MD

#### Urology

Bradley Thorgaard, MD

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First Nurse (800) 524-6877



McFarland Clinic PC

# Eyes: Disorders, Symptoms and Treatment

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progressed, vision is impaired making it difficult for some to perform daily tasks.

#### Signs and Symptoms of Cataracts:

- Clouded or blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light and glare
- Halos around lights
- Double vision
- Fading or yellowing of colors
- Difficulty with vision at night

Cataracts may occur in one or both eyes. However, typically they develop symmetrically in both eyes. Age is the greatest risk factor for developing cataracts, the older you get the more likely your vision may deteriorate or become cloudy due to cataracts.

Having a routine eye exam will allow the physician to detect cataracts, even if you are not showing any symptoms. The only treatment for a cataract is surgery. "Cataract surgery is a very common and relatively safe surgery," said Dr. Hamouche. The surgery is performed under

local anesthesia on an outpatient basis. During the surgery, the cloudy lens of the eye is removed and replaced with a new artificial lens.

#### Ophthalmology Outreach Now Available in Webster City

Dr. Hamouche has started a new ophthalmology outreach at the McFarland Clinic Webster City location. He will see patients for cataract surgery, diabetic eye care, glaucoma treatment and macular degeneration.

Dr. Hamouche has been a board certified ophthalmologist since 1996 with subspecialty training in glaucoma. He has been providing care for McFarland Clinic patients since 2001.

"I enjoy establishing relationships with my patients while helping them to preserve their vision," said Dr. Hamouche, who is excited because of the continuous improvement in the medical and surgical care ophthalmologists can offer their patients these days.

To schedule an appointment to see Dr. Hamouche please call, (515) 832-6700.