

The Addabbo Newsletter
Connecting the Community

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INFLUENZA IS BACK!

After a couple of years when influenza took a back seat to Covid, the flu is back with a vengeance this year. Wearing masks and fewer indoor large gatherings definitely affected the transmission of the flu viruses but now that fewer people are wearing masks and indoor gatherings will once again be the norm, we can expect the flu to make up for lost time and strike back. In fact, it already is doing so and earlier than normal increases in seasonal influenza activity continue nationwide.

Influenza is a contagious respiratory disease caused by flu viruses that infect noses, throats and lungs. Flu is not the same thing as a cold. A cold generally comes on slowly but the flu affects a person quite suddenly. Statistically, the flu causes millions of illnesses, thousands of hospitalizations and even deaths. The good news is that there is a safe vaccine that is known to be very effective this year against the strains of the influenza viruses circulating. Children are also very susceptible to getting the flu and its complications such as ear and sinus infections, pneumonia and bronchitis. Again, good news...there is a safe vaccine for children.

Hospitals and emergency rooms are filling up with a surge of flu cases and doctors are warning people to get vaccinated for flu and COVID-19, especially ahead of the holiday season. The flu is already hitting hard, with many states reporting high levels of flu activity, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Many other states are quickly following suit.

Flu viruses are spread mainly by droplets when people with the flu cough, sneeze and talk. These droplets can find their way into the mouths and noses of people who are nearby and could also get into the lungs. It is possible that a person could get the flu virus by touching a surface that has the flu virus on it and then touching their mouths, noses maybe even their eyes. This method however, is less frequent.

Most infected people are contagious with the flu during the first three to four days after getting sick. However, the flu virus can be detected in infected people **one day before** symptoms develop and up to **five or**

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WORLD AIDS DAY 2022

Since 1988, the world has commemorated World AIDS Day on December 1st each year. People around the world unite on this day to show support for people living with HIV and to remember those who have died from AIDS-related illnesses. It is important for us to increase awareness amongst people about HIV AIDS. This year's theme is **Putting Ourselves to the Test: Achieving Equity to End HIV**".

Do you know your HIV status? HIV testing has now become a part of routine healthcare. Your primary care provider may recommend that you include an HIV test in your annual checkup. Knowing your status is a big part of being in control of your health—Knowledge is Power. If you do test positive, you can begin treatment quickly and find much needed support. Everyone travels a different path with HIV. A positive HIV diagnosis can happen to anyone but it doesn't mean that you can't live a longer and healthier life with the many treatment options now available.

Although World AIDS Day happens only once a year, it is important to remember the importance of raising awareness of HIV all year round. Show your support by wearing the international symbol of HIV awareness and support - **a red ribbon**. *Know your status by putting yourself to the test.*





Transgender Day of Remembrance
November 20

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HOLIDAY MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO, MIRIAM Y. VEGA, PHD



It is at this time of year, mixed in with the whirlwind of busyness of the Holidays, that we focus on gratitude, family, friends and colleagues. Together we have come through some challenging years of pandemic, and even though we remain in some uncertainty about the future, I want to assure you that whatever the challenges that lie ahead in 2023, JPA is poised and ready to meet those challenges with dignity and compassion. We know our patients count on us and we appreciate that. We highly value the fact that we have been entrusted with their healthcare.

We could not have successfully navigated through these past years without the dedication and spirit of our staff. Our health teams have worked together throughout fear and fatigue and prevailed no matter how challenging the circumstances. We would not be where we are today without their passion and spirit. I am profoundly grateful and proud of what we have accomplished together.

We have some exciting things planned for 2023! Among other things, we are looking forward to the opening of our new, state-of-the-art building at our Beach Channel Drive, Arverne, location, the establishment of a Diabetes Wellness Center and an expansion of our Pediatric Dental Department—all to better serve our patients and communities.

I have a favorite quote by Ralph Waldo Emerson that I draw from at the beginning of each new year: *“Write it on your heart that every day is the best day of the year.”* With that in mind, I wish you all a happy and healthy Holiday Season and look forward to serving you and partnering with you in the New Year!

Miriam Y. Vega, PhD
Chief Executive Officer

Influenza is Back Cont'd. from page 1



This is a germ spreading sneeze!

seven days after getting sick. Unfortunately, people can spread the flu to others before they even know they are sick. Infants and people who have weakened immune systems may be contagious for even longer periods of time.

Flu symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, sneezing, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, feeling tired and sometime vomiting and diarrhea (more often in children). A bad case of the flu is not a pleasant thing to deal with. Children often have to visit their pediatrician as they are more vulnerable to complications such as sinus and ear infections, bronchitis or pneumonia. Because Covid-19 and the flu can have similar symptoms, the best way to determine if you have one or the other is to take a Covid-19 test. It is important to know the difference because there are treatments for both, but they are not the same.

No matter how big or small the flu season turns out to be, **the Gold Standard is still to get vaccinated.** The CDC recommends that every person six months and older get the flu vaccine every year. That includes pregnant people. As cases are going up quickly, now is the time to get your shot if you haven't already. The vaccine doesn't guarantee you won't get infected, but it reduces the risk of serious illness and hospitalization. It is also safe to get the Covid-19 vaccine and the flu vaccine at the same time.

Additional ways to prevent catching the flu are avoiding close contact with people who are sick, staying home when you have flu symptoms, covering your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing and washing your hands often.

You may also consider masking up again if you are in an area where people are close together indoors. It's never a bad idea to mask to prevent catching COVID and the flu. Visit your primary care provider to learn which flu vaccine is right for you.



YES! HANDWASHING IS IMPORTANT—VERY IMPORTANT

Personal hygiene begins and ends with our hands. It's simple and true—clean hands prevent illness. Germs could care less what time of day it is, so only washing our hands at mealtimes really isn't sufficient. Hand washing **IS** all important and especially now, when the flu, covid and other illnesses are circulating, it's time for all of us to do it right once and for all.



**“Be Aware
Wash with Care”**

Germs can spread when they get on your hands and you touch your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. They can spread when you prepare food with unwashed hands or when you touch surfaces that have germs on them. If you blow your nose, cough or sneeze into your hands and then touch other people or common objects, germs can spread. Everyone spreads germs so we should not forget about the germs lurking on objects frequently touched by other people such as door handles, toys, tables, supermarket shopping carts or even gas pumps and ATMs.

The CDC recommends washing your hands in a very specific way to make sure you are truly getting your hands clean. Here's **how—and why** you should do it correctly.

Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap because hands could become recontaminated if using standing water so clean running water should be used. **Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap and make sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails** because lathering and scrubbing hands creates friction, which helps lift dirt, grease, and microbes from skin. **Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds** while humming the "Happy Birthday" song two times. **Rinse your hands well with clear running water** to rid your hands of the lather and germs. **Dry your hands thoroughly** with a dry towel or air dryer because germs can attach themselves more easily to wet hands.

Mom was right! Washing hands with soap and water is still the best way to remove all types of germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

See? It's easy to do and can save you, your family and your community from germs that are just waiting in the wings! **Good Health is in Your Hands!**

'TIS THE SEASON OF BUTTER

Butter cookies...butterball turkeys...butter in the stuffing...butter on holiday rolls...butter pie crusts...butter pecan pies...butter in and on mashed potatoes...butter slowly melting on those fresh vegetables...and let's face it, one of our favorite expressions particularly around holidays, is "Please pass the butter". Americans are expected to purchase 161 million pounds of butter from the second week in November through Christmas. Butter in its many flavorful forms is the world's most popular fat. As a spread, a delicious enhancer for so many foods, and the essential ingredient for baking, butter's goodness has no equal.



It's rare that someone doesn't like butter, but we all feel that twinge of guilt when we use it because we know it's high in calorie and saturated fats—not good for our heart health. Then along came the margarine substitute which never tasted quite as good and can have loads of trans fats—also not good for our hearts.

Who discovered this tasty, tempting food? The actual origination of butter is quite interesting, Apparently it was "discovered" some 10,000 years ago long before good and bad cholesterol were in the picture. Historians speculate that butter was discovered when a desert nomad threw a goatskin full of milk on the back of the camel who then lurched off across the desert. When the nomad arrived at his destination, he was surprised to find a congealed mass of what we now call butter in the goatskin. The swaying of the camel helped to churn the milk into quite a tasty substance. Now, butter is usually made from cow's milk, though goats, sheep and even yaks and buffaloes are used in some parts of the world.

Nutritionists generally agree that the 'all butter is all bad' era is over, and butter can fit in a nutritious and healthy diet of anyone who enjoys it. But, they are quick to point out that **ONLY** in moderation, i.e. a healthy amount is most likely **1 tablespoon** per day. There are both pros and cons to butter—a debate that has been going on for years and will most likely continue. There are some good and bad things about

'Tis the Season of Butter Cont'd.

butter:



- It can help lower your chances of cancer as it contains beta-carotene which has been linked to lowered risks of lung cancer and prostate cancer and may help slow the rate of vision loss or age-related macular degeneration. Butter also contains vitamin D., a nutrient vital for bone growth and development and calcium which can help prevent diseases such as osteoporosis. And, it also contains Vitamin E which plays a role in skin health, reduces damages from UV sun rays, skin inflammation and improves the healing of skin wounds.
- However, butter is high in calories and fat — including saturated fat, which is linked to heart disease. Because you usually have other sources for saturated fats, it is best to limit your butter intake especially if you have heart disease or need to cut back on calories. It is recommended that we eat fewer ultra-processed foods, eat more smart proteins, whole grains and healthy fats at meals and snacks within portions that help maintain health and weight.

Bottom line, even though it's the holidays, we should not be free-wheeling butter eaters. The best way to determine how butter can fit into your diet is to discuss your overall diet with your primary care provider. As with all holiday feasts, the tendency is to overeat - an easy way to handle that is to eat smaller portions and have a taste of everything delicious and return to your healthy diet and exercise plan the next day.

SOME FUN DAILY OBSERVANCES IN DECEMBER

December is certainly one month of the year that is packed full of holidays and adjacent festivities. Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, New Year's Eve—all very busy and big holidays. However, every day in December has been set aside for a national recognition of some sort and there is something else to celebrate according to today.com. Here are a few lighthearted examples of days you may want to celebrate as well:



Dec. 1st: Eat a Red Apple Day, National Cookie Cutter Day, National Christmas Lights Day
Dec. 2nd: National Mutt Day, National Build Joy Day, National Fritters Day
Dec. 3rd: Let's Hug Day, National Green Bean Casserole Day, Make a Gift Day
Dec. 4th: National Cookie Day, National Sock Day, Wear Brown Shoes Day, Candle Day
Dec. 5th: National Blue Jeans Day Dec. 6th: National Microwave Day Dec. 7th: Cotton Candy Day
Dec. 8th: National Brownie Day Dec. 9th: National Pastry Day, National Llama Day
Dec. 10th: National Salesperson Day Dec. 11th: International Mountain Day
Dec. 12th: Gingerbread Decorating Day, National Poinsettia Day Dec. 13th: National Cocoa Day, National Cream Cheese Frosting Day, National Horse Day Dec. 14th: Monkey Day, Roast Chestnuts Day
Dec. 15th: National Cupcake Day, Lemon Cupcake Day, National Re-Gifting Day
Dec. 16th: National Chocolate Covered Anything Day Dec. 17th: National Ugly Sweater Day
Dec. 18th: Bake Cookies Day Dec. 19th: National Hard Candy Day, National Oatmeal Muffin Day
Dec. 20th: Go Caroling Day, National Sangria Day Dec. 21st: Don't Make Your Bed Day, Look on the Bright Side Day, National Crossword Puzzle Day Dec. 22nd: National Cookie Exchange Day
Dec. 23rd: National Christmas Movie Marathon Day Dec. 24th: Christmas Eve, Last Minute Shoppers Day, Eggnog Day Dec. 25th: Christmas Day, National Pumpkin Pie Day Dec. 26th: National Candy Cane Day, National Thank You Note Day Dec. 27th: National Fruitcake Day, Visit the Zoo Day
Dec. 28th: Card Playing Day, National Call a Friend Day, National Chocolate Candy Day
Dec. 29th: National Cello Day Dec. 30th: National Resolution Planning Day
Dec. 31st: Make Up Your Mind Day, National Champagne Day, New Year's Eve

HAVE A GREAT MONTH OF CELEBRATIONS!

DECEMBER IS FILLED WITH HOLIDAYS and STRESS?

If there is one month in the year when the calendar is filled with well-known holidays, it's December. Between Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and New Year's Eve, we all keep pretty busy planning, shopping, baking, cooking and celebrating. In general, holidays should be times of thankfulness, reflection, observance and celebration but, financial pressures, too many commitments and unrealistic expectations can bring about some tension and stress. We have all felt some of it every year and it takes its toll.

Ever watch those "perfect" holiday gatherings on TV commercials? Perfect well-groomed families gathered around the dinner table in perfect homes with perfectly cooked turkeys and side dishes...all of those images push us towards demanding those scenes from ourselves and others. Those perfect scenes are not the most valuable takeaways from the holidays, relationships are! By turning your attention to the people sitting around the table, expressing genuine interest in what they are doing in their lives is far more important.

A real stress creator is the feeling that we have to decorate to the max—use all the decorations we have accumulated over the years and even buy more! Truth be told, simple decorations can be just as festive as those over-the-top decorations. It's always good to include the items that are meaningful to your family, but feeling like you have to squeeze in

absolutely everything in those storage boxes can create unnecessary stress and lots and lots of dust and clutter!

When families get together, there is generally a few differences of opinion over politics, family squabbles or life in general. The holidays are a great time to put those differences aside and just enjoy each other's company. That way, you don't have to worry about who is sitting next to each other at the table and can just enjoy! The weather is always a good topic, too!

Many of us feel like we have to "bust the budget" for holiday gift giving. Financial pressure is tough enough these days without adding that pressure to the mix never mind when the credit card bills come in January creating even more stress. It is the season for giving, but all that retail hype we have to deal with can put the pressure on us. Hint: Ignore it.

Scheduling too many activities can also create stress. We should leave some time to rest, have some quiet evenings or casual gatherings. Trying to stick to your exercise routine and healthy eating habits can also reduce stress. Drink lots of water and limit those alcoholic beverages. Instead, **fill your glasses with beauty, joy, love and gratitude and focus on what's really important—family.**



MIRIAM Y. VEGA, PHD—AMONG MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE IN QUEENS

Miriam Y. Vega, PhD, Chief Executive Officer at the Joseph P. Addabbo Family Health Center (JPA) has been designated as one of Queens's Most Influential People by Schneps Media. She received this recognition because of her continued commitment, impact and influence in Queens County. Under Dr. Vega's leadership and guidance, JPA's five (5) sites are successfully emerging from the pandemic challenges and are continuing to serve the community with increased services and care.

"It has not been an easy path for any of us in healthcare," said Vega. "We have a very dedicated staff many of whom exemplify what it means to be dedicated to the patients they serve, and it makes a huge difference." Dr. Vega went on to say that more focus on community health care in general is needed as increased numbers of people are depending on health centers such as JPA for their healthcare."

Dr. Vega was also recognized for her deep commitment to addressing healthcare disparities as she continues to dedicate her professional career to bringing quality, culturally responsive and comprehensive healthcare services to those who need it the most.

The awards ceremony was held at Terrace on the Park on October 27, 2022.





YUMMY AND EASY SUGAR COOKIES FOR HOLIDAY DECORATING

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup butter softened
- 1/3 cup shortening
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- Dash salt
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 cups all-purpose flour

Instructions

- **Beat butter and shortening** in a medium mixing bowl on high speed for 30 seconds.

- **Add** sugar, baking powder, salt and beat until combined, scraping the sides of the bowl occasionally.
- **Beat** in egg and vanilla until combined.
- **Slowly add and beat** in as much of the flour as you can with the mixer and if necessary, mix in the remainder with a wooden spoon.
- **Chill** for about 3 hours until dough is easy to handle.
- **Roll out** the dough using a rolling pin to about 1/8 inch thick on a lightly floured surface.

Use whatever cutout shapes you wish and place on un-greased cookie sheet. Bake in a 375 degree oven for 7 to 8 minutes. Transfer cookies to a wire rack and let cool before icing. Decorate the cookies for any holiday you celebrate—and enjoy!



GREETINGS

Whichever holidays you celebrate, whatever your plans are, whether traveling or staying home, we hope your holidays are filled with warmth, peace and joy. Wishing you and your families a very happy, healthy and safe holiday season. We look forward to serving you in 2023.



About Us

Established in 1987, the Joseph P. Addabbo Family Health Center, Inc. (JPA) is a non-profit Federally Qualified Health Center with five (5) operational facilities located on the Rockaway Peninsula, Southeast Queens, and Red Hook, Brooklyn. JPA has been designated a Level III (the highest level) Patient Centered Medical Home.

Our caring professional staff of Board Certified Physicians, Nurses and certified support staff offer a wide range of services including routine in-person appointments, televideo and telephonic consultations and “walk-in” service for sick visits.

We have a long history of delivering exemplary medical services. We look forward to continue providing our patients with the same standard of excellence.

FTCA Deemed Organization. The Joseph P, Addabbo Family Health Center is granted medical malpractice protection through the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA). The Joseph P. Addabbo Family Health Center receives HHS funding and has Federal Public Health Service (PHS) deemed status with respect to certain health or health-related claims, including medical malpractice claims, for itself and its covered individuals. This institution is an equal opportunity employer.

For the safety of everyone, please continue to wear your masks, maintain social distancing, avoid large gatherings and wash your hands frequently.

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