

# Bringing the past to life

**D**ress codes just aren't what they used to be! Need proof? Just look at the nurse's cap that the JGH Legacy Project has received from the hospital's Department of Nursing. These items will be documented by the Legacy Project, based in the Health Science Library, in an effort to preserve JGH history during the hospital's 75th anniversary this year.

Your department can help keep the past alive by donating or lending photographs, documents, medical instruments or any items of historical importance to the JGH. This is your opportunity to play a lasting role in the 2009 festivities! For more information, please contact Linda Lei at ext. 3277 or [dlei@jgh.mcgill.ca](mailto:dlei@jgh.mcgill.ca); or Shiri Alon at ext. 2453 or [salon@jgh.mcgill.ca](mailto:salon@jgh.mcgill.ca). ♦

— **Linda Lei**, Archival Consultant



*Shiri Alon, Library Technician, and Linda Lei, Archival Consultant, with a decades-old cap once used by the Department of Nursing.*

Learn more about the Legacy Project online at [JGH.ca/legacy-fall-2008](http://JGH.ca/legacy-fall-2008)

## PHinding out about the PHlu vaccine

### PHarmacy PHacts

#### *What is the flu vaccine and how does it work?*

The vaccine is created using elements of inactivated influenza viruses which are grown in fertilized hens' eggs and then purified. It works by stimulating the production of antibodies in your immune system to help keep you from contracting the flu virus. The flu virus often mutates from year to year, which means the vaccine has to be updated annually. That's why you must get a flu shot

starting in the fall and as early as possible during the winter.

#### *Who should receive the vaccine?*

About 10 million doses of influenza vaccine are distributed in Canada each year during the flu season. Shots are particularly important for people with chronic lung and heart disease, asthma, and other illnesses. They are also strongly recommended for people living in a care facility; children 6 to 23 months old; those 65 and older; healthcare and daycare workers; and people who travel frequently.

According to Health Canada, certain people should not receive the

vaccine, including children less than 6 months old and people who have had a severe allergic reaction to eggs or a prior dose of the flu vaccine.

#### *Where is it available?*

If you're an employee of the JGH, just come to Health Services during office hours; be sure to bring your hospital and Medicare cards. Flu vaccine are also available at local CLSCs and from family physicians.

#### *Tips on avoiding the flu*

- Wash your hands with water and soap several times a day.
- If you get the flu, increase your intake of fluids.

- If a member of your family is sick, keep hand sanitizer in the house and be sure to disinfect household items, such as telephones and remote controls.

- Get enough vitamins in your diet. If necessary, talk to your doctor about supplements.

For more information, contact the JGH Pharmacy at 514-340-8222, ext. 5025, or Megan Martin at [mmartin@jgh.mcgill.ca](mailto:mmartin@jgh.mcgill.ca). ♦

— **Megan Martin**

*Pharmacy Communications Officer*

## A healthy shot in the arm

**A**s unappealing as a vaccination shot might seem to some people, **Dr. Mark Miller** says that being struck by the flu is worse still. "I've had the flu and it felt like I'd been run over by a Mack truck—five times," Dr. Miller, Chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases, told staff who had gathered in the Block Amphitheatre for their flu shots.

To inject some fun into the vaccinations, the Division packed learning, games, contests and prizes into Infection Prevention and Control Week from Nov. 10 to 14. JGH staff were visited by flu vaccine and hand-washing carts,

treated to tours of the Microbiology Lab, and had an opportunity to get their flu shots alongside senior administrators, including Executive Director **Dr. Hartley Stern** and Director of Nursing **Lynne McVey**. Anyone vaccinated before Dec. 17 was eligible to win prizes such as an LCD TV, digital cameras, MP3 players and more.

But not even great prizes can motivate everyone. **Dr. Joseph Portnoy**, Director of Professional Services and an infectious diseases specialist, drew laughter when he told staff that 5 per cent of respondents to a 2008 *Consumers Reports* survey refused a flu shot

because they said they'd rather get sick than go to work. Dr. Portnoy said he doubts any JGH employees share this sentiment, but they may have some of the other reservations cited in the survey—namely, that they never get the flu, or they know of someone who became sick despite being vaccinated.

Dr. Portnoy explained that those struck with the flu soon after they received the vaccine were probably already infected when they were vaccinated, even if they showed no symptoms. Another possibility is that they were suffering from an influenza-like illness, which results in flu-like symptoms but is not caused by a virus. Flu shots do not contain a live virus, he said, and are our best bet for avoiding



*Ronni Czuzoj, a nurse in Health Services, gives Lynne McVey a flu shot.*

influenza and its related symptoms, as well as hospitalization and even death. "I even encouraged my pregnant daughter to get vaccinated, and to have her two children vaccinated."

If you missed the Infection Prevention and Control Week festivities, you can still be vaccinated against the flu at Health Services. ♦