



Health Link Quarterly

YOUR LINK TO QUALITY HEALTHCARE CLOSE TO HOME

Antimicrobial Resistance and Stewardship Efforts at MRHS

By Ian Alverson, PharmD, BCPS

Antibiotics play a very important role in healthcare by allowing us to treat infections that may otherwise permanently disable or kill a patient. Over time, there have been newer antibiotics that are more effective at eliminating infections, have fewer side effects for patients, and have overcome resistance that has developed to older antibiotics. Antimicrobial resistance occurs when a bacteria, or other infectious agent, develops a mechanism that protects it from an antibiotic that would have previously been effective at killing it. These resistant mechanisms develop naturally as pathogens evolve over time, but can be accelerated through the misuse of antibiotics.



In order to fight antimicrobial resistance, Madison Regional Health System has developed an Antimicrobial Stewardship Committee. The committee consists of a multidisciplinary team of providers, pharmacists, nurses, lab personnel, and administrators. With guidelines and recommendations compiled from national organizations such as the Infectious Disease Society of America, American Academy of Family Physicians, and others in their respective fields, we compare our local antibiogram (a breakdown of what antibiotics treat specific bacteria) and establish treatment algorithms for different infections.

The guidelines we establish contain recommendations for initial antibiotic options based on most likely pathogen, length of therapy, route of therapy, and alternatives based on possible allergies and likelihood of it being a resistant bacteria. This allows our providers to order the antibiotic most likely to be effective even before we have laboratory data for confirmation. Often times we will obtain laboratory information to confirm the susceptibility of the pathogen to the selected antibiotic. When possible, we modify the treatment to a more effective option, change the length of therapy, or even change the route the antibiotic is given if we can.

Overall, the goal of the committee is to provide the most effective antibiotic for killing the pathogen, reduce the likelihood of adverse events for the patient, and avoid unnecessary antibiotics when possible. All of these measures help to slow the development of resistance by the various pathogens and keep the efficacy of our antibiotics intact for future generations.

Madison Regional Health Foundation Launches “Building a Healthier Tomorrow” Campaign



The Madison Regional Health Foundation is proud to launch its 2025–2026 Building a Healthier Tomorrow capital campaign to strengthen rural healthcare in our community. This initiative will fund lifesaving medical equipment, support scholarships and medical professional recruitment, and address critical needs in key departments such as Emergency, OB, Diagnostic Imaging, and Rehab/Therapy. It will also help advance priorities identified in the Community Health Needs Assessment conducted in March 2025.

The campaign seeks to raise \$3 million by December 2026.

“Any gift to this effort is an investment in the future of rural healthcare and our community,” said MRHF Executive Director Stephen Klekas. “This campaign gives individuals, families, businesses, and foundations the chance to create a lasting legacy of exceptional care and a healthier future.”

Ways to give include pledges, cash, check, stocks, annuities, in-kind donations, and legacy gifts such as life insurance policies, acreage, and trusts. For more information or to make a contribution, please contact Stephen Klekas at stephen.klekas@madisonhospital.com or 605-256-8817.

Flu Vaccine Q&A

With Laura Hoefert, MD, FAAFP



Is the flu vaccine safe? If so, who should receive it?

The flu vaccine is safe and recommended for those 6 months of age or older.

The only people who are not recommended to receive the flu vaccine are those with a history of Guillain-Barré or a history of severe allergy to the flu vaccine. It is important to note that severe side effects like this are estimated to occur in 1 in 1 million vaccinated people. In contrast, around 650,000 people die yearly of the flu worldwide.

Does the vaccine provide any benefit if someone still contracts the virus?

Yes! Flu vaccination has demonstrated a reduction in deaths, reduction in ICU admission or length of stay, and duration of hospitalization during illness when compared to those who did not receive it.

Why do we need a flu vaccine every year?

A person's immune protection from vaccination declines over time, so an annual vaccine is needed for optimal protection.

Second, because flu viruses are constantly changing, flu vaccines may be updated from one season to the next to protect against the viruses that research suggests may be most common during the upcoming flu season.

When should the flu vaccine be obtained?

Before the start of flu season, and for sure before the end of October. It takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop. Infants and young children receiving their first vaccine will require two doses, one month apart. In general, as soon as the vaccine is available, you should get it.

Upcoming Flu Shot Clinics:

- Monday, October 13th
- Tuesday, October 21st
- Thursday, October 30th

By appointment only!

Call (605) 256-6551 to schedule.

Please bring your insurance card to your appointment.

Knowing the Stroke Warning Signs: Every Second Counts

Every second counts when it comes to stroke. Being informed about common stroke symptoms could be lifesaving!

Sudden onset of these symptoms could be a stroke:

Right-Sided (Hemisphere) Stroke

- Slurred speech
- Weakness or numbness of the left side of the face, arm, or leg
- Left-sided neglect
- Right gaze preference

Left-Sided (Hemisphere) Stroke

- Speech problems - what is being said, or inability to get words out
- Problems with comprehension
- Weakness or numbness of the right side of the face, arm, or leg
- Left gaze preference

Brainstem Stroke

- Nausea, vomiting, or vertigo
- Speech problems
- Swallowing problems
- Abnormal eye movements
- Decreased consciousness
- Crossed findings (both sides of the body)

Hemorrhagic Stroke:

Intracerebral Hemorrhage

- Nausea and vomiting
- Headache
- One-sided weakness
- Decreased consciousness

Hemorrhagic Stroke:

Subarachnoid Hemorrhage

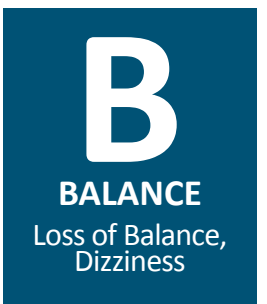
- Worst headache of life
- Intolerance to light
- Neck stiffness or pain

**Symptoms may occur alone or in combination with each other.*

If you or someone you know may be having a stroke, call 9-1-1 right away. Early treatment can make all the difference in recovery and survival.

Your awareness could save a life.

Use the acronym **B.E.F.A.S.T** for recognizing a stroke:



American Heart Association.
Mission:Lifeline®
Stroke

Madison
REGIONAL HEALTH SYSTEM