

The crazy weather the local area has been experiencing over the last several weeks has left many residents sitting in their doctor's office waiting to see what will make them feel human again. Many local residents are fighting through head colds, respiratory infections, bronchitis and even the dreaded flu.

According to local health officials, patients are being treated for the flu on a daily basis in local doctor's offices and urgent care centers.

"There are always a lot of flu cases depending on when it happens. There seems to be clusters of them," stated Dr. Janna Sellmer, Clark Memorial Hospital Medical Center- Charlestown's newest physician. "Back in 1918 three percent of the world's population were lost to the flu. That was less than 100 years ago. Three percent of the population vanished."

Dr. Sellmer stated the office personnel are doing "a fair amount of testing for it (flu)."

"Last week we had four cases, just in one week," stated Dr. Sellmer.

The flu has kept Clark Memorial Hospital's Urgent Care at Hunter Station busy for several months. According to Clark Memorial Hospital's public relations department, Urgent Care is treating six patients a day for the flu.

Dr. Sellmer was quick to answer what symptoms a patient needs to look for when they are battling the flu.

"Fever greater than 100, usually 100 to 103, body aches, body aches are always a sign of a viral illness, head aches, and cough. You can also have cold symptoms, too," Dr. Sellmer added. "You can suffer from vomiting and diarrhea, but kids get that more than adults. For adults it is more respiratory. And then, it is the suddenness of it. It just hits you so sudden. Most adults can only be up about two hours a day when they are suffering from the flu."

The actual test to find out if you are suffering from Influenza is quite easy. It is a quick nasopharyngeal swab, according to Dr. Sellmer.

"It is just a swab of the nose. It is inserted in the nasal cavity. There is no pain, and you can even ask to do the swab yourself. The best way is to have the patients do it themselves," Dr. Sellmer stated.

By the time you leave the doctor's office, you will have your results of the test. The test results are determined in less than 15 minutes and the patient is checked for Influenza A and B.

The treatment for the flu is also easy on the patient.

"We treat it with an antiviral medicine, usually Tamiflu or Relenza," Dr. Sellmer stated. "It is a five day treatment. We also can use the old generic drugs to help the patient if they have no medical insurance or if their insurance does not cover the Tamiflu or Relenza."

Dr. Sellmer can even treat family members who are not suffering from the flu but live in a household where someone has been diagnosed.

"If there is household contact we can treat other members of the household as a preventative," Dr. Sellmer added. "Insurance will cover the preventative treatment. If they (insurance company) will cover for the flu, they will cover for the preventative treatment."

Nobody wants to suffer from the flu or does not want to see anyone they love suffer from the nasty flu bug. Dr. Sellmer had a quick solution when she was asked what she recommends to help prevent the spread of the flu virus.

"Flu shot. The flu shot done early in the year. You can get the flu shot as early as October or November. The flu shot is worth more than all the hand washing in the world. Hand washing is good to do, but you can't never wash enough to make up for the flu shot," Dr. Sellmer

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explained. "If everyone would get the flu shot, then there would be a herd immunity. You should get vaccinated every year. Someone who has had 15 vaccinations is better than someone who has had one, as long as the one with 15 vaccinations has received the current year flu shot."

Dr. Sellmer graduated from Jeffersonville High School before attending Medical School at Indiana University. She spent her residency at St. Francis. Dr. Sellmer then spent 17 years in private practice and five years in Emergency Room and Urgent Care in Indianapolis before returning back home to Southern Indiana.

"I tend to like acute care. I like to help people with their lifestyle changes like their chronic problems such as hypertension and diabetes," Dr. Sellmer stated.

She continued, "I like peds to geriatrics. I like the broad based range of family practice. I couldn't just look at warts all day or deliver babies all day."

Dr. Sellmer, a native of Jeffersonville, is ready to help the local community feel better. She has been practicing at Clark Memorial Medical Center- Charlestown since mid November. She is joined at CMH Medical Center- Charlestown by Carrie Hollkamp, FNP- C, Lois Burnett, FNP, C and Barry Taylor, FNP- C.

Clark Memorial Hospital Medical Center- Charlestown is located at 11500 State Road 62 in Charlestown. Same day appointments are available by calling 812-256-0700.

"We try to work people in. Sick visits are easy to get in on the same day," Dr. Sellmer explained.

Another convenience for the patient is Clark Memorial Hospital Medical Center- Charlestown has electronic medical records.

"The EMR (electronic medical records) system connects you to your specialist. It is patient friendly and convenient," Dr. Sellmer concluded.