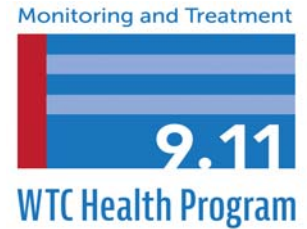




FDNY WTC Health Program



Volume VII

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Program Updates: Switch to Generic Drugs for GERD

If you were previously prescribed Proton Pump Inhibitor brand medication by one of our FDNY WTC Health Program (WTCHP) Treatment physicians under the WTC Prescription Plan, you may have already received a letter that explains a change in the WTC Prescription Plan, effective as of January 6, 2014.

- The change will involve implementing a Zadroga Law provision in the Proton Pump Inhibitor category, which requires a 'generics first', policy for WTC medications.
- The Zadroga Law (federal law governing WTC healthcare) mandates that the WTC Program be 'generics first' **for health categories where medical and clinical evidence indicates that brand and generic medications are similarly effective for symptom relief.**
- The PPI (Proton Pump Inhibitor) category of medications is one such category.
- PPIs help treat : Gastrointestinal Reflux (often referred to as GERD, acid reflux, or heartburn), chronic cough syndrome, or other throat conditions.

- The brand prescription medications in the PPI category- Nexium, Dexilant, Aciphex, Prevacid, Protonix, and Prilosec will be replaced by a prescription for one of the four WTC covered PPI generics-lansoprazole (generic Prevacid, Dexilant), pantoprazole (generic Protonix), omeprazole (generic Prilosec), or rabeprazole (generic Aciphex).
- Drs Kelly and Prezant, and the FDNY WTCHP medical staff, are confident that the PPI generic medication options **will be as effective** as the brand medications in addressing and alleviating your symptoms.
- While the brand to generic switch-over will have no impact on patient care, the substantial cost savings will be applied to enhance other FDNY WTCHP Treatment services for our members.
- Our FDNY WTCHP Treatment doctors are already reviewing WTC PPI brand prescriptions which they have written in the last year, and are replacing

them with a generic trial prescription for each member.

- If the first generic medication is not as successful at relieving your symptoms as the brand which you were previously using, your FDNY WTC doctor will issue you a prescription for a different generic PPI.
- Drs Kelly and Prezant request that you try a minimum of two generic PPI medications. They are confident that the vast majority of our members will find that their generic PPI will be highly effective in providing symptom relief, comparable to their previous brand PPI.
- If you continue to experience symptoms which were previously controlled by your brand PPI, and your Gastroenterologist (GI) concurs, your GI can write a letter requesting that you resume using your brand PPI.
- **For further questions please contact the FDNY WTC Nurses at (718) 999-1878.**

Prostate Cancer added as a WTC covered Condition

The addition of prostate cancer as a NIOSH approved WTC health condition makes it possible for members with prostate cancer to have all approved cancer treatment, drugs, and services paid for by the WTC Health Program. The first step in getting your cancer treatment paid for by the WTC Health Program is getting the cancer certified. The certification process establishes a link between the cancer and your 9/11 exposure. **To inquire about cancer certification contact Nadia Jaber at 718-999-1223.**

NIOSH will not reimburse for costs prior to the date of WTC cancer certification. You may be able to receive compensation through the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund (VCF) for past cancer treatment costs. For information regarding the VCF, please visit www.vcf.gov or call the VCF toll free at 1-885-1555.

For general questions about cancer care please call Michelle or Lana at 718-999-7040.

Staff Profile: Phil Mouren, Prescription Drug Administrator

Phil Mouren began his outstanding work with the FDNY-WTCHP in 2002 by assisting Dr. Kelly and Dr. Prezant at weekly Tobacco Cessation Program sessions, one of the early FDNY health responses to the WTC.

Phil became an official member of the staff in 2005, at a time when the WTCHP program was greatly expanding. He took on various duties including assisting the interviewing of candidates for WTCHP staff, and helping Dr. Kelly

and Dr. Prezant with the rollout of the new WTC Prescription Drug Plan in 2006.

Phil currently oversees the daily operation of the prescription plan, a growing component of the overall FDNY WTCHP. Phil also works as a liaison between the WTC program and the Fire and EMS unions.

Phil's commitment to serving members is evident in the energy he brings daily to answering prescription questions and quickly finding resolutions in order to make sure that members get the correct prescriptions without delay. Phil's dedication to serving members is matched by



an abundance of warmth and an enthusiastic and disarming laugh.

Phil is NYC born and raised. He attended the High School of Music and Art, and Hunter College, graduating with B.A. He is currently a proud resident of East Harlem served by 58 Engine / 26 Truck Firehouse.

Flu Shots Are Available at All FDNY WTCHP Sites



Did you get your flu shot yet this year? If not, be sure that you get one as soon as possible because the flu is a serious disease, and the best known way to prevent it is to get a flu shot.

The seasonal or annual flu is a virus that affects the lungs, throat, nose and other parts of the body.

Unlike the common cold, the flu comes on suddenly and makes you very sick for a week or longer, and it can send you to the hospital. In fact, each year in the United States, over 23,600 people die from the flu.

If you have a chronic respiratory disease such as COPD, asthma or a WTC illness you are especially at risk because the presence of respiratory disease weakens your body's ability to fight off the flu. Also, the flu can make respiratory disease worse.

In addition, important new studies show that in people who have had a heart attack or stroke getting a flu shot reduces the chances of having another cardiac event by more than 50%.

"We may have identified that the flu vaccine may also be a vaccine against heart attacks," says researcher and cardiologist Jacob Udell.

Fortunately, getting a flu shot couldn't be easier. They are available at local pharmacies, private doctors' offices and at all FDNY WTCHP Program Sites.

For more information, or to make an appointment for a flu shot call 718-999-1858.

Cancer and Your Mental Health:

Why It's Important to Take Care of Both

Receiving a diagnosis of cancer is likely to be one of the most challenging times in your life. While you and the medical team is busy planning and treating your physical illness, it is important to make sure you attend to your mental health as well.

Upon receiving the initial diagnosis, everything becomes uncertain. Questions about the treatment process come up, fears about what that will be like, as well as questions about your chances of survival arise.

Often hospitals offer patient education so that you can better know what to expect and prepare. But even so, the process itself can leave you feeling exposed, and vulnerable and can bring up a range of feelings including fear, anger and sadness. These feelings can accompany you throughout treatment.

It is normal to feel apprehensive before your first chemotherapy treatment or before a surgery. You may also experience some concerns about your future health, the impact of your illness on your significant other and children or your financial security.

It is important to let someone on the treatment team know how you are feeling, because some levels of distress can interfere with the successful treatment of the cancer, and can be helped by the proper mental health treatment.

It is crucial to feel well enough psychologically so that you can do everything possible to take good care of yourself, i.e. follow your medication regimen and get to all treatment and follow-up appointments.

Some things that can help with the stress are:

- Relaxation techniques such as meditation
- Counseling, individual or group
- Cancer education
- Medications for depression or anxiety
- Exercise (when appropriate)

Cancer Support Groups

Studies have shown that patients who attend support groups have a higher quality of life than those who do not. For the newly diagnosed patient, it lessens isolation and helps lend a feeling of normalcy to an often turbulent time by being with others facing similar challenges.

For those patients who are finished with treatment, it gives them a place to speak about their fears of survival long term, that they might not feel comfortable sharing with family, as well as an opportunity to help others who are just beginning their treatment.

The benefits of attending a group include:

- Sharing experiences
- Preventing isolation
- Learning techniques for managing anxiety, depression, sleep difficulties
- Exchanging valuable information
- Providing support, encouragement and hope to others

We are currently in the process of forming support groups at all five locations of FDNY-CSU based on need and interest.

Brentwood, Fort Totten, Manhattan, Orange County, and Staten Island.

For more information, or to participate please contact Jessica Metz at 212-570-1693.

FDNY WTC HEALTH PROGRAM

9 MetroTech Center, Room 2E-13
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Phone: 718-999-1858
E-mail: wtcmed@fdny.nyc.gov



FDNY WTC HEALTH PROGRAM

When was the last time you came for your WTC Medical?

Call 718-999-1858 to make your appointment.

WTC Medicals

**are available annually to active members in Brooklyn (Metrotech)
and retired members at all 5 locations.**

Not all testing is done On-Site at every location.

Retirees, please use table below to find your location and testing information:

| | Brooklyn HQ | Fort Totten | Orange County | Staten Island | Brentwood |
|-------------|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Address | 9 MetroTech Center Brooklyn, NY 11201 | Building 413A Bayside, NY 11364 | 2279 Goshen Turnpike Middletown, NY 10941 | 1688 Victory Blvd Staten Island, NY 10314 | Suffolk County Community College 1001 Crooked Hill Rd. Brentwood, NY 11717 |
| Days | Tuesday — Friday & Occasional Sundays | Monday — Thursday | Thursday, Friday Monday Treatment Only | Monday, Tuesday, & Wednesday | Monday & Friday Occasional Sundays Tuesday Treatment Only |
| Hours | 8:00AM to 2:00PM | 8:30AM to 3:30PM | 9:00AM to 1:00PM | 8:30AM to 3:30PM | 8:00AM to 3:30 PM |
| Blood Tests | On-Site | On-Site | On-Site | Off-Site | Off-Site |
| X-Rays | On-Site | Off-Site | Off-Site | Off-Site | Off-Site |

Referrals to nearby facilities for off-site tests will be given to you by a WTC nurse on the day of your appointment.