

Insights

your health and your hospital



An Ounce of Prevention: Avoiding Wild Parsnip Burns

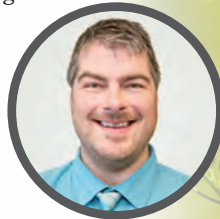
The summer season brings with it a host of ailments that can make it tough to enjoy Vermont's outdoor spaces, including sunburns, allergies, and rashes. Protecting yourself and your family ensures you get to spend your time having fun in the sun rather than in a waiting room.

Pediatrician Dr. Scott Spicer recently talked about exposure to wild parsnip – a weed that is cropping up more and more around Vermont. Unlike poison ivy, this invasive weed causes a skin reaction that requires both contact with the sap of the plant and exposure to the sun. In June, the Vermont Department of Health issued a warning for Vermonters to steer clear of the weed, which is often seen along roadsides. The plant bears yellow flowers that look similar to the white Queen Anne's lace wildflower.

"If you're going to be working in weeds and you know there may be exposure, the best thing is going to be to wear long sleeves and long pants and keep it off your skin then wash yourself, and your clothes," said Dr. Spicer, who is part of the Northwestern Pediatric team.

Sunburns are a common pediatric complaint, but families also encounter a wide variety of skin irritations in the summer including the "poison parsnip" issue, said Dr. Spicer. For all these complaints, prevention is the key – using appropriate sunblock and planning ahead to prevent exposures.

Dr. Spicer said that wild parsnip exposure can cause red or blistered skin, but that the sores tend to be painful rather than itchy. Most exposures can be treated at home, but if the problem involves a large area of the body, it is a good idea to see your healthcare provider. Feel free to contact Northwestern Pediatrics or any of NMC's Primary Care Practices with questions about treating poison ivy, poison oak, or parsnip burns.



Dr. Scott Spicer

Pictured: wild parsnip. It's easy to identify - it resembles the Queen Anne's lace wildflower, but is always bright yellow.



Health Education
{we do that here}

NMC publishes Insights on a bimonthly basis to help our neighbors have a better understanding of their primary care hospital. If you have questions or comments about this publication, please email insights@nmcinc.org or call our Community Relations Office at 524-1280.

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Three Nursing Leaves Added to the Tree of Life

NMC Charge Nurse Jessica Rogers recently placed leaves on the Tree of Life honoring Anna May Olmstead and Kathleen Riley. Anna May was her grandmother and an RN who trained at the St. Albans Hospital and continued her 40+ year career at both the St. Albans Hospital, then at Kerbs.

She worked in the OR, managed the pharmacy, and was working in case management when she retired.

Jessica said that Kathleen Riley liked to call herself Jess' "adopted" grandmother. Kathleen did her nurses training at the Degoesbriand Hospital in Burlington and worked most of her career here at NMC (or Kerbs back in her day), taking a leave to work for Dr. Casavant until his death. She returned to Kerbs and was a second shift supervisor when she retired after 40+ years.

"They were both part of my inspiration to become a nurse," said Jessica.

The two women both passed away last year, and Jessica and her father discussed a way to honor their memory, landing on the idea of the Tree of Life, as many of the women's friends and former co-workers are memorialized there.

"They were both great nurses and even better grandmothers," she said.

Jess was surprised at the recent quiet ceremony with a third leaf – this one bearing her name and purchased by her father to honor her career as well.

"I was so very honored to place their leaves on the tree," said Jessica, after affixing the three leaves on the tree, which stands proudly in the main lobby of the hospital.

Pictured: Jessica Rogers, RN, poses with three new leaves added to NMC's Tree of Life recently. For information about a Tree of Life memorial leaf, contact Director of Development Jeff Moreau at 524-8467.



Dr. Haitham Nsour Joins Northwestern Pulmonology

NMC is pleased to welcome Dr. Nsour who brings locally-based, full-time pulmonary services back to our community. Dr. Nsour most recently practiced at the University of Vermont Medical Center in the Department of Pulmonary, Critical Care & Sleep Medicine and he is board certified in those disciplines, as well as in Critical Care and Internal Medicine.

He is excited to establish and grow consistent and high-quality pulmonary services in our community, and began seeing patients in St. Albans in July. He will practice in the new Medical Clinics building located at the front of NMC's campus, just off the main hospital entrance. Dr. Nsour will provide the diagnosis and treatments for conditions like asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), respiratory ailments, and shortness of breath.

To make an appointment with Dr. Nsour, call 524-8909.



Urgent Care Expanding Hours this Fall



Georgia Location:

Starting in October, Northwestern Urgent Care's office in Georgia will be open on Sundays, and have longer weekday hours. The new Georgia hours will be:

Monday through Friday:
8:00 am – 8:00 pm

Saturday: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Sunday: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

St. Albans Location:

The St. Albans Urgent Care clinic will also have longer weekend hours, opening at 8:00 am on Saturdays!



Tired of Paper? Sign up for our electronic newsletter!

We recently launched **eInsights**, a digital version of our community newsletter. We'll continue sending this paper version, but the digital edition allows us to provide more timely news briefs, seasonal recipes, and links to upcoming events. Sign up for eInsights by emailing Kate Laddison in Community Relations at kladdison@nmcinc.org.



Dr. Kahren Aydinian examines a young patient.

Northwestern Ear, Nose & Throat Opens in Mid-August

Dr. Kahren Aydinian and Stephanie Maloney, Au.D. opened the doors on NMC's newest practice – Northwestern Ear, Nose & Throat – in mid August. The two create a dynamic and well-balanced team, offering ENT services that have been absent from Franklin and Grand Isle Counties.

Dr. Aydinian grew up in Vermont. Throughout his medical schooling at the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine, he dreamed of coming back to practice here. His most recent position was at the Oklahoma State University Medical Center. He is also a Major and Physician in the Army National Guard, having served since high school in roles like a Medical Platoon Sergeant and Chief Combat Medic. He is pleased to help NMC offer our community close-to-home and comprehensive ear, nose and throat services as well as treatment for head and neck issues.

Maloney became interested in audiology when she worked at a school for the deaf in Mafraq, Jordan. She is passionate about early identification of hearing loss so that kids can get support and have the best possible chances in life. She looks forward to offering our community a place where people of all ages get the highest quality care and feel well supported.

Northwestern Ear, Nose and Throat is accepting new patients at 10 Crest Rd., located on NMC's campus. To make an appointment, call 802-524-1000.

New Medicare Cards are Coming!

Medicare is mailing new Medicare cards. Here are 10 things to know about your new Medicare card:

1. Mailing takes time: Your card may arrive at a different time than your friend's or neighbor's.

2. Destroy your old Medicare card: Once you get your new Medicare card, destroy your old Medicare card and start using your new card right away.

3. Guard your card: Only give your new Medicare Number to health care providers, your insurers, or people you trust to work on your behalf.

4. Your Medicare Number is unique: Your card has a new number instead of your Social Security Number.

5. Your new card is paper: Paper cards are easier for many providers to use and copy, and they save taxpayers a lot of money.

6. Keep your new card with you: Carry your new card and show it to your health care providers when you need care.

7. Your doctor knows it's coming: Doctors, other health care facilities and providers will ask for your new Medicare card when you need care.

8. You can find your number: If you forget your new card, you, your doctor or other health care provider may be able to look up your Medicare Number online.

9. Keep your Medicare Advantage Card: If you're in a Medicare Advantage Plan (like an HMO or PPO), your Medicare Advantage Plan ID card is your main card for Medicare – you should still keep and use it whenever you need care. But, you also may be asked to show your new Medicare card, so you should carry this card too.

10. Help is available: If you don't get your new Medicare card by April 2019, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227). TTY users can call 1-877-486-2048.

- From the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Improving Access to Palliative Care

Our health system is very good at aggressive medical management of patients with serious illness. Patients, family, and friends all feel better when patients “get better.” Unfortunately, due to the progressive nature of many chronic or serious illnesses, at some point, treatments stop working, or become too much of a burden to the patient to be of use. We must all get better at acknowledging when that time has come, and provide support and focus to meet the other needs of patients with serious illnesses. We must become more adept at addressing needs like basic pain and symptom management, emotional support, information and decision-making guidance, and planning and coordination of needed resources throughout the expected course of their illness. This is the essence of palliative care.

Fortunately, there has been a national increase in available palliative care support.

Locally, we are working to provide better access to palliative care for our community members with both serious chronic conditions and functional dependency. These patients are either not eligible or emotionally ready for hospice, but with illness too advanced for additional aggressive therapy to be appropriate. We are looking to bridge that gap with support of our community partners in Home Health and Primary Care Offices and improve quality of life by supporting patients' individual goals, anticipating and managing symptoms that cause distress.

Capitalizing on NMC's commitment to being innovative and providing exceptional care to our community, we have started a palliative care pilot study to assess the need and best delivery system of a patient-centered palliative care program to support our community. The project is focused on a small

population of patients where we felt we could make a difference, with a hope to broaden to a larger group over time. We started the project in January 2018 and patients and community partners are already reporting a general feeling of improved support and quality of life. We have partnered with local home care agencies and local primary care offices to provide focused disease education, enhanced discharge planning, and increased communication and collaboration in order to best support pilot participants in their homes.

Simply put, the goal of palliative care is to improve quality of life and decrease physical and emotional suffering for patients and families impacted by serious illness, or life-threatening disease. Adding palliative care to the plan of care is appropriate for people at any point in a serious chronic illness.

INSIGHTS TO HEALTH

Your guide to local healthy programs, classes, and more!



Ongoing Classes

Cancer Exercise Rehab Group

Ongoing every Tuesday and Thursday
8:00 to 11:00 am

This class pinpoints the common needs of patients, which include decreased range of motion, decreased strength, and cancer-related fatigue. A physical therapy evaluation is required to assure that the client is able to participate.

Featuring: Wendy Lawrence, certified NMC Oncology Rehab Physical Therapist

Location: NMC Rehab gym, Cobblestone Building

Pre-Registration required:
Call 524-1064

Fee: Free for the first 8 weeks, then \$40.

Prenatal Fitness

Ongoing every Wednesday
5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Northwestern OB/GYN offers these free prenatal exercise sessions to strengthen and prepare you for a successful birthing experience. Join other moms as we lead you through a customized routine designed to make you feel energized and confident. Please consult a physician before beginning this exercise program.

Featuring: Stephanie Preedom, AFAA

Location: NMC Wellness & Fitness Room

Pre-registration required:
Call 288-1141 or email
stephanie.preedom@gmail.com.

Fee: Free to Northwestern OB/GYN patients

August 2018

Tobacco Cessation Class

Thursdays, August 2-23 11:00 am to 12:00 pm

Join others for this 4-session series to help you successfully quit smoking. Sessions include: understanding why you have an addiction and how to quit; mastering the first few days, mastering obstacles; and staying quit and enjoying it forever. As a Vermont resident, you can get free patches, gum and lozenges.

Location: NMC Conference Center, Maple Room

Pre-Registration Required: Please call 524-8480

Breastfeeding and You

Wednesday, August 15 12:00 to 1:30 p.m.

For you, family members, and other moms-to-be. Plan for breastfeeding your newborn in the first month of life. Personalize your breastfeeding plan, line up your support, go over the basics, ask questions and get real-life answers.

Location: Vermont Department of Health, St. Albans District Office, Federal Street

Registration: Please call 524-7971

September 2018

Diabetes and You

Fridays, September 7 to October 5
1:00 to 3:00 pm

Join us at this self-management educational series for people with diabetes and their families, proven to help people improve control of this disease. Learn how to keep diabetes from controlling your life and improve your blood sugar control to feel better and delay or prevent complications.

Location: Enosburgh EMS

Pre-Registration Required: Call 524-1031

Fee: NMC will bill your insurance for the course fee. Scholarships available. No one will be turned away for lack of ability to pay.

Breastfeeding and You

Tuesday, September 18
6:00 to 7:30 pm

For you, family members, and other moms-to-be. Plan for breastfeeding your newborn in the first month of life. Personalize your breastfeeding plan, line up your support, go over the basics, ask questions and get real-life answers.

Location: NMC, Family Birth Center Conference Room

Registration: Please call 524-7971



Tai Chi

Mondays, starting September 10 to November 12
4:00 to 5:00 pm and 5:15 to 6:15 pm

Tai Chi is a form of gentle, guided movement that is sometimes referred to as "meditation in motion" and can aid in reducing stress and anxiety. It has also been found to improve balance and promote a sense of wellbeing. This eight-week program is open to all ages. A physical authorization is required, so please register early. Taught by NMC Physical Therapist Pat Cervini.

Class size limited to 12

Location: NMC exercise room at the main hospital

Pre-Registration Required: Contact Casey at 524-8485 to reserve your spot today

Fee: \$80 for 10 sessions