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A Place to Grow
Special Care Nursery Delivers Expertise and Compassion to High-Risk Babies

When Kate Meehan went in for her regularly scheduled ultrasound at 34 weeks of pregnancy, she did not expect a reason to be concerned. Her pregnancy had been progressing without incident and her twins, Liam and Maggie, were healthy and developmentally on track. She and her husband, Bobby, were ecstatic about the prospect of starting their family.

So it came as a shock to the expectant parents from Salem when doctors explained that one of their babies, Liam, had developed intrauterine growth restriction (IUGR) and had stopped gaining weight. A cesarean delivery of both twins would have to be performed—as it turned out, later that very same day.

Over the emotionally charged month that followed, the Meehans became well acquainted with the staff of NSMC’s Level IIB Special Care Nursery and came to appreciate not only the clinical expertise it provided in caring for their premature babies, but also the nursery’s unwavering kindness and compassion.

“We certainly hadn’t planned on having the babies when we went in for that appointment,” says Kate. “We were relieved that we had passed the 32-week mark, which we knew was a milestone for development. But I was still two months shy of my due date and we were incredibly scared about the babies’ ability to breath and eat on their own.”

Admitted to the NSMC Birthplace at Salem Hospital that afternoon, Kate was scheduled to begin a round of steroid treatments to help strengthen the babies’ lungs prior to delivery. Before this could even take place, Liam’s heart rate began to drop. The surgery had to be performed immediately. Just hours later, Liam and Maggie were delivered by NSMC OB/GYN Justine Gelinas, D.O., weighing just 3 lbs. and 5 lbs., respectively.

“The babies were incredibly small and fragile—just ridiculously tiny,” recalls Bobby, who was the first to see the twins after birth. “Liam’s head fit right in the palm of my hand.”

The babies were immediately transferred to NSMC’s Special Care Nursery, also located at Salem Hospital, where a team of neonatologists, pediatricians, nurses and respiratory therapists worked to stabilize their vital signs. Maggie, though larger in size, was less developed than her brother.

Affecting just 2 to 3 percent of all pregnancies, IUGR is a term used to describe a baby who is not growing at a normal rate inside the uterus. This can occur for a variety of reasons, but in the case of the Meehans, it was causing Maggie to receive more oxygen and nutrients than her brother.

“Not only were the staff incredibly skilled, they were beyond compassionate and supportive.”

In addition to supplemental oxygen and IV feeding tubes, she also required the use of a continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machine, sometimes used to treat preterms infants whose lungs have not fully matured. Both were kept in incubators to fight jaundice.

“As a licensed Level IIB Special Care Nursery, we are well equipped to care for high-risk babies born as early as 32 weeks,” says Sanjay Aurora, M.D., M.P.H., Chief of Newborn Medicine. “Our first priority with Liam and Maggie was to assure them with breathing, keeping them stable and helping them grow. Our excellent staff is very supportive of parents. We are quite aware that having premature babies is an emotionally challenging experience.”

The Meehans describe the days and weeks that followed as being full of small victories and a few setbacks. Liam continued to have feeding issues and dropped to 2 lbs. 6 oz. before finally bustling up. Over time, the twins continued to grow and develop and were eventually sent home, Maggie after 17 days and Liam after 27. Two years later, both are “happy, fun, curious, sassy little kids,” according to their mom.

“The whole experience was incredibly difficult,” says Kate. “All you want to do is bring your babies home and start your family.” What made all the difference, she says, was the exceptional care they received. “Not only were the staff incredibly skilled, they were beyond compassionate and supportive. There was always a smile for us when we walked through the doors, a greeting by name, a hug when needed. We felt as though we were always a priority and that everyone there had all the time in the world for us.”

The babies were discharged from the neonatal intensive care units at Brigham and Women’s Hospital and Massachusetts General Hospital, ensuring the most advanced approach to infant care on the North Shore.

For more information or to donate to the Special Care Nursery, please contact Sara Andrews at 978-741-1242.

Kate Meehan of Salem enjoying some play time with her twins, Liam and Maggie. Both children were born prematurely and began their lives in the NSMC Special Care Nursery.
A Taste for Good Health

Gastric Sleeve Surgery Leads Peabody Couple to More Vibrant Life

Until last year, Peabody resident Jonathan Sheldon, 34, never denied his appetite for unhealthy foods. “I have always loved fried foods, sweets and lots of other things I probably shouldn’t have been eating,” he says. The long hours associated with his job as an owner of a busy IT engineering business didn’t help matters either, leading him to grab fast food meals on the run. Over time, he began to put on weight.

“Obesity runs in my family but I never viewed my weight as a real problem,” says Sheldon. It wasn’t until he topped 300 pounds and started to have weight-related health issues like high cholesterol and a racing heartbeat that he realized he needed to take action.

On the advice of his cardiologist, Mark Anderson, M.D., Sheldon enrolled in the NSMC Cardiac Risk Reduction Program, a 12-week course designed to educate patients on how to prevent the development and progression of heart disease. While he was participating in this program, one of the counselors suggested that he might be a good candidate for weight loss surgery.

A consultation with NSMC’s director of bariatric (weight loss) surgery, Bernard Benedetto, M.D., followed and, after discussing all of his options, Sheldon decided on having sleeve gastrectomy surgery. His wife, Meredith, 33, had undergone the same procedure at North Shore Medical Center in January of 2012 and lost a life-changing 100 pounds.

Since his surgery in June 2012, Sheldon has lost an impressive 80 pounds and has never felt healthier.

“I like to describe the surgery itself as being the starting bell,” says Dr. Benedetto. “Once a patient recovers from surgery, that’s when the real work begins. This is where our program excels because we make sure the patient is closely monitored, cared for and supported to ensure long-term success.”

The Sheldons learned their lessons well, dramatically changing their eating and exercise habits and embracing an all-around healthier lifestyle. The couple has even hired a personal trainer to help them take their exercise up a notch and are talking about starting a family.

“Before the surgery, I limited my physical activities because I didn’t want to feel uncomfortable,” says Sheldon. “But now I am feeling stronger and healthier than ever and doing more and more every day.”

“The sleeve gastrectomy is a minimally invasive procedure in which we remove about 85 percent of the stomach through small incisions made in the patient’s abdomen,” says Dr. Benedetto. “The remaining portion of the stomach is then stapled together in a vertical manner giving it a sleeve shape that remains connected to the intestines. One potential benefit of this procedure is that, although it restricts the amount of food the patient is able to eat, it does not involve re-routing the intestine and may have fewer long-term side effects than traditional gastric bypass.”

Since his surgery in June 2012, Sheldon has lost an impressive 80 pounds and has never felt healthier. Both he and his wife took full advantage of NSMC’s comprehensive post-operative program, which includes medically supervised cardiac risk reduction, nutrition and psychological counseling, exercise, general education and peer support.

Sleeve gastrectomy surgery is one of several minimally invasive weight loss procedures offered through NSMC’s Surgical Weight Management Program. Through the procedure, 85 percent of the patient’s stomach is removed through small incisions made in the abdomen. The remaining portion of the stomach, which resembles a sleeve or slim banana, reduces how much a patient can eat, helping one to feel fuller faster.

Sleeve gastrectomy surgery is different from other weight loss surgeries because there is no cutting, re-routing or bypassing any portion of the small intestine as is the case with traditional gastric bypass surgery. There is also no band or other permanent restrictive device left in the body after the surgery as with laparoscopic adjustable gastric band surgery.

THE GASTRIC SLEEVE OPTION

Benefits:

• The stomach still functions normally and the patient can still eat virtually all food items, just in smaller portions.
• The surgery can be performed as a minimally invasive procedure, reducing discomfort and improving recovery time.
• By avoiding the intestinal bypass, the sleeve greatly reduces the chance of complications such as intestinal obstruction, marginal ulcers, anemia, osteoporosis, protein deficiency and vitamin deficiency.
• The sleeve procedure eliminates the portion of the stomach that produces the hormones that stimulate hunger.

NSMC’s Surgical Weight Management Program is accredited as a Level 1A Bariatric Surgery Center by the Bariatric Surgery Center Network Accreditation Program of the American College of Surgeons. This is the highest level of accreditation a bariatric center can receive. For more information, visit www.nsmcweightloss.org or call 978-825-6505.

In their own words

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www.youtube.com/northshoremadceneter

After receiving gastric sleeve surgery at NSMC Salem Hospital, Meredith and Jonathan Sheldon of Peabody have embraced a healthier lifestyle.

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Physician Q&A

Q | I’ve been feeling stressed and depressed lately. How do I know if I need to seek professional help?  
   Feelings down in the dumps some days is a part of being human. Usually these times pass and we begin to feel like our normal selves again after two weeks or so. If your emotional problems are lasting longer and preventing you from living a happy life, reach out for support. Symptoms may include difficulty sleeping, irritability and trouble with jobs or relationships. If these issues are becoming increasingly persistent, discuss them with your primary care physician (PCP), who can evaluate you and make the appropriate referrals if needed. Whatever the problem, your PCP and mental health specialists will help you find ways to better cope with difficult feelings or behaviors.  
   To contact Dr. Santos-Martins, please call 978-563-3400.

Q | My son is eight years old and rambunctious. Do I need to have him tested for ADHD?  
   Many things besides attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) can cause challenges in children, such as learning disabilities, conduct disorders, oppositional defiant disorder or even depression. Children with ADHD are not just hyper-energy kids; they also can have severe difficulties focusing their attention and organizing their thoughts. On the other hand, highly energized, active kids who do not have ADHD can usually focus when it is necessary to accomplish a goal. Meet with your pediatrician and explain what you have observed at home and the feedback you have received from the school regarding your child's behavior and performance in the classroom and ask for a comprehensive evaluation. This information will help you learn the best way to support your child. To contact Dr. Zalitis, please call 978-745-1050.

Q | Beyond medication, what can I do to manage my spring allergies?  
   When allergy levels in the air reach their peak, they can often make their way into our homes. Allergens such as pollen tend to stick to fabrics and can be carried inside on our own clothes and belongings and deposited on furniture and the walls. Try to avoid triggers by keeping windows closed. Wash your bedding, pajamas and clothing as much as possible during the spring season. Showering after being outside is also an easy way to avoid exposure to allergens. If you do have to go outside, be sure to wear your sunglasses to prevent pollen from entering your eyes. To contact Dr. Narusевич, please call 978-745-1200.

Q | I recently had an abnormal pap smear. What does this mean?  
   Being alarmed or worried is a completely normal reaction when your pap smear is abnormal. A pap smear checks for changes in the cells in your cervix and reveals other minor underlying conditions that cause changes in your cervical cells. An abnormal pap smear indicates the presence of abnormal cells and usually means that you should have further evaluation. Most common abnormalities are infection, inflammation, yeast infection, an STD or HPV. Although cervical cancer is a real threat to women, receiving an abnormal pap is not a cancer diagnosis. The most important thing you can do is to get a follow-up evaluation and continue to have annual check-ups to track any changes. To contact Dr. Lawler, please call 978-739-6975 or 781-599-2600.

Classes & Services

Disease Management
- Cardiac Rehabilitation 978-477-3300
- Cardiac Risk Reduction 978-477-3900
- Diabetes Management Program 978-477-3400 (Lynn, Gloucester)
- Living Well with Heart Failure 978-354-2577
- Pulmonary Rehabilitation 978-477-3102
- Surgical Weight Management 978-825-6505

Wellness Classes and Services
- Acupuncture
- Chair Strength Training for Seniors
- Chi Gong
- CPR 978-354-3013
- Fitness Gym
- Hypnotherapy
- LEARN Program for Weight Control
- Massage
- Meditation
- Personal Training
- Reiki
- Smoking Cessation 978-477-3900
- Stress Reduction Clinic (adults and teens) 978-354-2670
- Tai Chi
- Yoga & Taijiquan
- Zumba

Support Groups
Please contact the following organizations for meeting times and locations.
- Addiction Recovery
- ADHD Parent Support Group 978-354-2660
- Al-Anon 918-866-0556
- Asthma and Food Allergy Support Group 781-598-5952
- Bereavement: Fatal/Newborn Loss 978-354-3357
- Bipolar Disorder Parent Support Group 978-354-2660

Breastfeeding Support Group 978-354-3263
- CPAP Support Group 978-354-3197
- Depression Support Group (for teens) 978-354-2670
- Diabetes Management Support Group 978-477-3409
- Fibromyalgia Support Group 978-740-1022
- Gastric Bypass, Band and Sleeve Support Group (pre- and post-op support) 978-823-6595
- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Group 978-741-1215 ext. 2623
- Grief Recovery after a Substance Passing (GRASP) 781-593-3224
- HAWC (Healing Abuse Working Change) 978-344-6611
- Laryngeotomy Support Group 978-236-1455
- Learn to Cope (substance abuse family support) 978-354-2660
- Mindfulness for Children (ages 8-10) 978-354-2670
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder Support Group 978-354-2670
- Overeaters Anonymous 781-641-2303
- Parents Helping Parents 978-354-2660
- Sibshop Support Group (for siblings of children with special needs) 978-354-2660
- Stress Reduction Clinic (adults and teens) 978-354-2670
- Stroke Support Group 781-631-0114

Cancer Support Groups
- Breast Cancer Support Group 978-882-6002
- Children Whose Parents Have Cancer Support Group 978-882-6873
- Head and Neck Support Group 978-882-6002
- Healing with Hope 781-477-3505

If you have a health question you would like answered by our experts, send us an email at HealthyLife@partners.org.

Most classes begin in January, April, June and September. Call or log on for more details.

Locations and Contact Information

Dawners 1 Mass General/North Shore Center for Outpatient Care 102 Endicott Street, Danvers
Dawners 1 NSMC Women’s Center One Hutchinson Drive, Danvers
Lynn 1 NSMC Union Hospital 500 Lynnfield Street, Lynn
Salem 1 NSMC Salem Hospital 81 Highland Avenue, Salem
Salem 1 Mass General for Children at North Shore Medical Center 57 Highland Avenue, Salem
Salem 1 NSMC Wellness & Integrative Medicine Center 408 Highland Avenue, Salem 978-740-1022
nsmcwellness@partners.org

Childbirth and Care
Call In Parenting at 781-429-1500 or log on to isparenting.com to register for classes.

To register online or sign up for advanced email notification of class registration, visit nsmc.partners.org, or call 1-978-740-1022.
with her heart surgery at the NSMC Heart Center behind her, Joanne Cunningham of Salem now has plenty of time to spend with her loved ones.

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Michael Katcher, M.D.; cardiac surgeon Ann Toran, M.D.; cardiologist Maury McGough, M.D., a new life: primary care physician Thomas Carr, Jr., M.D., M.P.H., recently joined the staff of the NSMC Heart Center. Board certified in general and thoracic surgery, Dr. Carr is a graduate of Harvard University and New York Medical College. He completed a fellowship in cardiothoracic surgery at Boston University Medical Center. His clinical interests include adult cardiac and thoracic surgery, including coronary artery surgery and mitral valve repair.

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NSMC Heart Center Gives Salem Grandmother A New Lease on Life

L ongtime Salem resident Joanne Cunningham’s heart has always been filled with happiness. Surrounded by her large, extended family, the cheery great-grandmother enjoys nothing more than spending time with the people she loves.

But this life full of love was unexpectedly interrupted when Cunningham’s heart began to race uncontrollably, causing her to experience dizzy spells, shortness of breath and a great deal of discomfort. “I suddenly went from living life freely to being anxious and worried,” says Cunningham. “And living life like that was not for me.”

When her symptoms intensified, Cunningham consulted Maury McGough, M.D., her primary care physician and NSMC Director of Primary Care, who diagnosed her with atrial fibrillation. Also referred to as A-fib, atrial fibrillation is a condition that causes an irregular and often rapid heart rate that can lead to poor blood flow throughout the body. “It’s this poor blood flow that causes people to feel dizzy and weak,” says Dr. McGough.

“When we determined that a leaky heart valve was causing increased pressure in Joanne’s heart chambers, contributing to her fast and irregular heart rate and causing shortness of breath,” explains Ann Toran, M.D., NSMC Chief of Cardiac Surgery, who, in addition to repairing the valve, also performed a procedure to control the electrical impulses in Cunningham’s heart. “Together, these procedures stopped Joanne’s atrial fibrillation, stopped the valve from leaking and gave her a new lease on life.”

Throughout her surgery and recovery, Cunningham’s family was there to support her, thanks to the close proximity of NSMC’s Heart Center—the North Shore’s only comprehensive cardiac program that includes angioplasty and advanced cardiac surgery.

“I received the best care from the best people—and all in my own community,” says Cunningham. “For me, atrial fibrillation was just a bump in the road. Now that I am recovered, my heart is full of nothing but love.”

“Advanced Cardiac Care Close to Home

THE NSMC HEART CENTER offers the most advanced and comprehensive cardiac program on the North Shore. In addition to exceptional medical and surgical care, the Heart Center offers a wide range of prevention, rehabilitation and support programs. Its longstanding collaboration with Massachusetts General Hospital also ensures the highest level of care while enabling patients to remain close to home and family. The physicians, nurses, clinical assistants, administrators and support staff in the Heart Center provide patients with compassionate, professional clinical care throughout their treatment.

CLINICAL SERVICES

• Percutaneous Coronary Interventions (PCI) and stents
• Cardiac catheterization
• Cardiac surgery
• Cardiac rehabilitation program
• Cardiovascular risk reduction
• Cardiology evaluation and testing
• Electrophysiology and arrhythmias
• Living Well with Heart Failure program
• Vascular surgery and testing

For more information on the NSMC Heart Center or to find a cardiologist affiliated with NSMC and Massachusetts General Hospital, please visit nsmc.partners.org/heart_center.

Joanne Cunningham of Salem with her loved ones.

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Congratulations to the five North Shore Medical Center physicians who were named among the “Best Doctors in Boston” in the December 2012 issue of Boston magazine. The list is comprised of more than 645 Boston-area physicians in 50 different specialties. From NSMC, the list includes Daniel Doody, M.D., pediatric surgery; Allan Goldstein, M.D., pediatric surgery; James MacLean, M.D., allergy and clinical immunology; John Petrozza, M.D., reproductive endocrinology; and John Schorge, M.D., gynecologic oncology.

To make and appointment with Dr. Doody, please call 978-739-6975 (Danvers) or 978-741-3700 (Salem).

NSPG WELCOMES TWO NEW OB/GYNS

CAROLINE LAWLER, M.D.
A graduate of the University of the Connecticut School of Medicine, Dr. Lawler’s clinical interests include minimally invasive surgery, abnormal pap smears and menopause. Board certified in obstetrics and gynecology, she sees patients at NSPG’s OB/GYN practices at 1 Hutchinson Drive in Danvers and 383 Paradise Road in Swampscott.

To make an appointment with Dr. Lawler, please call 978-739-6975 (Danvers) or 781-599-2600 (Swampscott).

MELANIE NATHAN, M.D.
A graduate of the University of the South Florida College of Medicine, Dr. Nathan’s clinical interests include adolescent gynecology, menstural disorders, abnormal pap smears, minimally invasive surgery and low- and high-risk obstetrics. Board certified in obstetrics and gynecology, she sees patients at NSPG’s OB/GYN practices at 55 Highland Ave., Suite 301 in Salem and 1 Hutchinson Drive in Danvers.

To make and appointment with Dr. Nathan, please call 978-739-6975 (Danvers) or 978-741-3700 (Salem).
Our primary care physicians are ready to care for you and your family. In the past year, we have welcomed several new primary care physicians to the North Shore, which means that many of our PCPs can offer you and your family an appointment with little to no wait time. And to provide you with the best care possible, all our primary care offices use electronic medical records. These doctors are your connection to the Mass General/North Shore Center for Outpatient Care as well as the full services of North Shore Medical Center and Partners HealthCare.

To learn more about our primary care physicians, please call our Physician Finder service at 1-877-NSMC-MDs (1-877-676-2637) or visit us online at nsmc.partners.org.