



FOR YOUR Health

Spring 2004

www.lowellgeneral.org

Your resource for healthy living from Lowell General Hospital

Lowell General Hospital Earns Five Stars for Maternity Excellence

Ranked Among Top 5 Percent in the Nation



Five-star excellence. From hotels to restaurants to luxury automobiles, a five-star rating is the symbol of the best.

HealthGrades, the nation's health quality experts, recently awarded The Birthplace at Lowell General Hospital a perfect five-star rating. The five-star award means that Lowell General is not only among the best in New England, but is among the top 5 percent of maternity centers in the nation.

"The high-quality ratings earned by Lowell General Hospital reflect a significant level of excellence," explains



Sarah Loughran, Senior Vice President of HealthGrades. "It is important for members of the community to be aware of this information, which we provide to help consumers make better informed health care choices."

What Makes The Birthplace a Five-Star Maternity Center?

HealthGrades independently analyzed hospitals nationwide, objectively grading their performance and quality, using a

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Angioplasty Gives New Hope to Heart Patients in Community

When it comes to a heart attack, minutes can mean the difference between life and death. Acute myocardial infarction—heart attack—strikes more than 1.5 million people each year, killing more than a third of them.

Recent medical studies have linked successful treatment of heart attacks with the presence of primary (emergency) angioplasty. Angioplasty is a medical procedure that opens a blocked

artery by inserting a balloon-tipped catheter with a metal mesh stent.

Bringing Emergency Angioplasty Close to Home

Starting this fall, Lowell General Hospital will become the first hospital in the Merrimack Valley to provide angioplasty, bringing a much-needed cardiac service to the 250,000 residents the hospital serves.

Currently, heart attack patients must

wait to be transferred from a Lowell hospital emergency room to another hospital, delaying necessary treatment

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one/three/five-star scale. One star is the lowest rating and a five-star rating represents exemplary performance. With the highest possible five-star rating, Lowell General Hospital is ranked in the top 5 percent of hospitals in the entire country.

HealthGrades analyzed such data as complication rates—problems during or after birth, volume of deliveries, and the presence of a neonatal intensive care unit. For example, the complication rate for all deliveries at Lowell General is 8.75 percent, compared with 19.57 percent at another local hospital that received a one-star rating. The national average is 11.81 percent. For cesarean births, Lowell General's complication rate was 4.02 percent, compared to the national average of 9.07 percent and 16.18 percent at the one-star hospital. Complete findings and ratings are published on the HealthGrades website at www.healthgrades.com.

So What Does This Mean for You?

If you—or someone you know—are



Moms trust Lowell General's five-star care for their newborns.

planning a baby in the future, it means that HealthGrades has taken the guesswork out of choosing the best maternity care for you and your baby.

"I had such a great experience with my baby's birth at Lowell General," says Brenda Coady, of Chelmsford, whose son,

Evan, was born last year. "Knowing they've earned this five-star rating and are among the best in the country, I wouldn't consider having my baby anywhere else."

About The Birthplace

With more than 2,100 deliveries every year, The Birthplace at Lowell General Hospital is the area's most trusted birthing unit. Lowell General features the area's only Special Neonatal Care Nursery. Affiliated with the New England Medical Center's Floating Hospital for Children in Boston, the Level II neonatal care unit at Lowell General Hospital provides specialized care to babies born up to eight weeks early and weighing as little as 2 pounds.

Lowell General's Maternal/Fetal Program, affiliated with New England Medical Center, provides specialized care for women at a high risk for difficult pregnancies. The Birthplace also offers prepared childbirth programs, including Hypnobirthing and certified lactation consultants. ■

For a personal tour of The Birthplace at Lowell General, or to find a five-star doctor for you and your baby, call 978-937-6665 or visit www.lowellgeneral.org/fivestarbaby.

Planning for Baby: A Prenatal Open House

If you're expecting a baby or planning one in the future, you won't want to miss this open house at The Birthplace at Lowell General on Thursday, April 15.

The evening features Frederick Wirth, MD, Founder of the national Institute for Perinatal Education, who will host a forum on "prenatal parenting," an innovative philosophy designed to help families create a healthy and loving pregnancy for their babies.

"A mother's relationship with her unborn child is powerful and can affect a child's emotional character for life," Dr. Wirth says.

The open house will also feature

personal tours of The Birthplace, where you will meet our obstetricians, mother/baby nurses, and certified lactation consultants. They will answer your questions about planning and delivering a baby, including the latest trends in hypnobirthing, prenatal yoga, nutrition, and infant massage.

**Planning for Baby
April 15, 6:30 to 9 p.m.
Lowell General Hospital**

Space is limited and you must register for this program. Call **978-937-6464** for more information or to register.

Angioplasty Gives New Hope to Heart Patients *continued from front page*

by precious minutes or even hours.

Quick Treatment of Heart Attacks Key to Success

“In the treatment of heart attacks, success relies on access to the best form of therapy in the shortest amount of time,” says Richard Birkhead, MD, Chief of Cardiology at Lowell General Hospital. “We believe that Lowell General Hospital has the personnel, experience, and capability to provide a quality primary angioplasty program to the community.”

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health recently began a special project to increase access to emergency angioplasty at qualified, community-based hospitals.

With the area’s most successful Regional Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory, a full-time Emergency Department, and the required volume of patients to support the services, Lowell General Hospital was approved by the state to provide primary angioplasty.

Continuing to Provide Great Cardiac Care

The addition of angioplasty is the latest step in Lowell General Hospital’s growing cardiac program. The hospital paved the way in 1991 by opening the area’s first



Preparing for angioplasty services at Lowell General Hospital: Norm Deschene, Lowell General Hospital President and CEO; Richard Birkhead, MD, Chief of Cardiology; Susan Wheeler, RN, MSN, CCRN; and James Waters, MD, Cardiologist.

cardiac catheterization laboratory.

In 2003, the hospital developed the region’s first enhanced external counterpulsation (EECP) program, a nonsurgical treatment bringing relief to many people with angina and other conditions involving poor circulation.

In December, Lowell General began electrophysiology (EP), an invasive procedure in which cardiologists can find the source of the symptoms of fainting or arrhythmia, evaluate the need for treatment, and insert pacemakers. ■

For more information, please visit www.lowellgeneral.org and click on Services and Specialties.

Physician of Note



Steven Alter, MD, a hand specialist and orthopedic surgeon affiliated with Lowell General Hospital, has received a certificate of added qualification (CAQ) for hand surgery. He is the only orthopedic surgeon in the region to have achieved this distinction as a hand specialist.

The CAQ can be pursued only after a physician has been board certified in orthopedic surgery.

Dr. Alter practices at Orthopedic Surgical Associates of Lowell, Westford, and Nashua. He may be reached at [978-454-0706](tel:978-454-0706).

Be Aware of Heart Attack Warning Signs

Understanding the risks and warning signs of heart attack is the first step in successful treatment.

RECOGNIZING SYMPTOMS CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE

A heart attack can cause a wide range of warning signs other than chest pain. These may include:

- shortness of breath
- nausea or vomiting
- pain that radiates down one or both arms
- back, neck, jaw, or stomach pain
- breaking out in a cold sweat
- severe headache—especially in older adults
- dizziness or fainting
- anxiety, weakness, or a strong feeling of doom.

If you think you may be having a heart attack, seek help immediately.

Lowell General Hospital has earned the Gold Seal of Approval™ from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO). Lowell General Hospital received an outstanding score of 94 by demonstrating compliance with national standards for health care quality and safety during an extensive on-site survey. “Lowell General Hospital is committed to becoming one of the best community hospitals in America,” says Normand E. Deschene, President and Chief Executive Officer of Lowell General. “Upholding the national standards of care is one of many ways the hospital strives to provide the community with the best quality and care.”



The TeamWalk for CancerCare

Each of you has a reason to be there. For some, it's a chance to celebrate your personal battle with and triumph over cancer. For others, it's an opportunity to honor the courage of a survivor, or the memory of a loved one lost. For many, it's a chance to be involved in your community in a meaningful way.

Whatever it is that draws you together, the purpose is the same. By joining the TeamWalk for CancerCare, you are improving the quality of life for LGH cancer patients and their families throughout greater Lowell. Through your participation and generous donations, you are assisting The Cancer Center at Lowell General Hospital in providing the highest level of care to your friends, family, and neighbors. From medication and transportation to counseling and community health screenings, the TeamWalk supports everything that makes The Cancer Center one of the best in the area.

Thousands of area businesses, families, teams, and individuals join together each year to support the TeamWalk's unique mission: to keep money in our local communities to help those who need it most. Over the past four years community businesses and participants have raised \$1,250,000 in support of this cause.

As we celebrate our fifth year, we need you to help make this the most successful event ever for cancer patients and their families.

The TeamWalk for CancerCare is about real people, real lives, real help. And every dollar counts. Everyone at The Cancer Center is sincerely thankful to all who are committed to walking, volunteering, and raising money in support of TeamWalk. ■



Sherry Roberge, Chief Radiation Therapist at The Cancer Center, congratulates a survivor with a medal at the finish line of the TeamWalk.

How You Can Join Us for the TeamWalk

There are several ways you can participate in this great experience to improve the quality of life for cancer patients and their families throughout the community.

WALK

Walk as an individual or put together a walking team—big or small—and get ready for the experience of a lifetime! You'll generate a sense of friendship and achievement among your friends and family walking in the TeamWalk.

SPONSOR

We encourage you to sponsor an individual or team. What an incredible feeling of accomplishment you will have knowing that your contributions directly help cancer patients.

VOLUNTEER

Volunteering at the TeamWalk for CancerCare is a fun and heartwarming experience. You'll help cheer on walkers, hand out T-shirts, water, and drinks, or help at the "Wall of Hope," where thousands of walkers leave inspirational messages. For additional information, call our volunteer hotline at 978-937-6434.

WHAT: TeamWalk for CancerCare; 3-mile, 6.2-mile, 13-mile, or 26-mile walk

WHEN: May 16. Registration is 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. The 6.2-mile walk starts at 9:30 a.m. and the 3-mile walk starts at 10 a.m.

WHERE: Starts and ends at Tsongas Arena in downtown Lowell. (Free parking in the Ayotte Garage, adjacent to the arena.)

HOW: Register to walk or volunteer online at www.lowellgeneral.org or call the TeamWalk hotline at 978-937-6434.

CancerCare 2004

Celebrating Five Successful Years



**TeamWalk
For CancerCare**

The Cancer Center at Lowell General Hospital



The Wall of Hope offers walkers the opportunity to write an inspirational message to those they hold in their hearts.

New TeamWalk Website!

Go to www.lowellgeneral.org and click on the TeamWalk logo.

Everything you need to make your walk successful is right here at your fingertips—personalized websites, general TeamWalk information, fund-raising ideas, sample letters, and e-mails! We've incorporated a fun and secure online tool for all participants—walkers, volunteers, and donors.



Team and Individualized Web Pages

Personalize your own Web page for you or your team! Add photos and stories for people to see and read. It's a great way to show friends and family why you are participating in the TeamWalk for CancerCare and how they can support you. (It's also an easy way to keep track of your donations.)

E-Mail

One of the best features on your personalized Web page is the e-mail option that allows you to create and send messages to your family, friends, colleagues, and team members. It's a great way to ask for donations, update them on the walk, send a personalized thank you, and keep in touch with your supporters!



"LPGA Hall of Famer" Pat Bradley, honorary TeamWalk chair, celebrates with Team Moriarty.

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Calendar

Classes & Upcoming Events

Health Education and Wellness Programs

Unless noted, you may register for all health education and wellness programs at 978-937-6464 or log on to www.lowellgeneral.org. Please note: adults must register children for programs.

■ Prenatal Yoga

This seven-week yoga class, taught by a certified Kripalu Yoga instructor, utilizes stretching, modified yoga postures, breathing, and relaxation techniques to help honor and support the body during pregnancy and the birthing process. Medical permission is recommended. The next available class starts in September. Please call for more information. Fee: \$70.

■ Childbirth Education

Including Hypnobirthing, Prepared Childbirth, Breastfeeding, Infant Massage, and Sibling classes. Call 978-937-6511 or log on to www.lowellgeneral.org.

■ Infant Massage

Learn special strokes and moves to soothe and stimulate babies in a nurturing, bonding experience. For babies age 4 weeks to 6 months. Fee: \$60 (includes two sessions and instruction book). Meets Wednesdays, 10 to 11:30 a.m. May 12 and 19

■ Baby-Sitting Basics

Baby-sitting skills for boys and girls age 10 and older. Fee: \$30. May 15, June 12, July 17, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

■ Body Fat Analysis

A computerized assessment to measure percentage of fat and lean body weight. Fee: \$15. Call 978-937-6227 for an appointment with our outpatient dietitian.

■ Nutrition Counseling

A one-on-one consultation with a registered dietitian to learn healthy eating habits for weight control and disease management. Requires a physician's referral. Call 978-937-6227 for an appointment with our outpatient dietitian.

■ Shapedown

An eight-week, family-based, behavior modification approach to weight management for children ages 6 to 12 years old. The program addresses the food intake and activity level of the child, as well as addressing the psychosocial and family system values that frequently underlie weight problems. The fee for the program is



\$100, plus \$40 for books and materials. For more information call Laura Morris, registered dietitian, at 978-937-6227. To attend Shapedown you must register at the orientation session.

Orientation session: April 14, 5:30 to 6 p.m.

Eight-week sessions: Wednesdays, April 28 to June 16, 5:30 to 7 p.m.

■ Diabetes Lecture Series

Learn about the latest in Diabetes Management. Fee: \$5 per lecture. Registration is required. Please call 978-937-6227 to register.

■ Carbohydrate Counting

*Speaker: Laura Morris, RD, LDN
April 29, 12:30 to 2 p.m. or 6 to 8 p.m.*

■ Long-Term Complications of Diabetes

*Speaker: Mary Downing, RN, CDE
May 13, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.*





■ Planning for Baby

This special evening is a “must” for expectant parents and couples planning a baby in the future! Featuring Frederick Wirth, MD, best-selling author and Founder of the national Institute for Perinatal Education. Dr. Wirth will discuss “prenatal parenting,” an innovative philosophy designed to help families create a healthy and loving pregnancy for their babies.

Also featuring personal tours of The Birthplace, where obstetricians, mother/baby nurses, and certified lactation consultants will answer your questions about planning and delivering a baby, including the latest trends in hypnobirthing, prenatal yoga, nutrition, and infant massage. Space is limited, and you must register for this program. Call **978-937-6464** for more information or to register.

*April 15, 6:30 to 9 p.m.
Lowell General Hospital*

Support Groups

■ New Mothers Support Group

Lowell General Hospital offers a drop-in support group for new mothers.
Meets every Tuesday from 10 a.m. to noon.

■ Down Syndrome Support Group

Parents of children with Down syndrome support each other and enrich the lives of their children so they may reach their fullest potential. Parents of children of all ages are invited. Children are welcome. For more information, please call **978-937-6511**.
Meets the third Monday of each month from 7 to 9 p.m.

■ Arthritis Support Group

For more information, please call **978-937-6511**.
Second Friday of each month from 8 to 9:30 a.m.

■ Perinatal Loss Support Group

The Perinatal Loss support group provides support and comfort when your family has suffered a loss through miscarriage, ectopic, stillbirth, or neonatal death. Call Linda Jezak in the Mother Infant Unit **978-937-6324** for more information.
Third Tuesday of every month from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the Lowell General Hospital Chapel.

Cancer Center Support Groups

Registration is required for all Cancer Center support groups. For more information or to register for cancer support groups, call **978-937-6142**.

■ Friends and Family Support Group

For specific meeting times please call **978-937-6142**.

■ I Can Cope

Third Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m.

■ Living with Breast and GYN Cancer

Third Tuesday of the month, 7 p.m.

■ Living with Advanced Cancer

For specific meeting times please call **978-937-6142**.

■ Look Good, Feel Better

Meets Mondays of these months: March, May, June, August, October, and November, 7 p.m.

■ Mi Nueva Vida con Cáncer

Las reuniones son a cada 3^o lunes del mes a las 6:30 p.m. Third Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m.

■ Patient and Family Group Support

Third Monday of the month, 6:30 p.m.

■ “Us Too” Prostate Cancer Support Group

Second Tuesday of the month, 6:30 p.m.

Need a Doctor? Call our Physician Referral Line at 1-800-544-2424.

PEDIATRIC FAST TRACK HOURS AND THINGS TO REMEMBER

Monday through Friday,
5 to 11 p.m.

Saturday, 3 to 11 p.m.

Sunday, noon to 11 p.m.

When you take your child to
the Pediatric Fast Track:

- Remember to bring your child's insurance card.
- Pack books or other quiet toys to make waiting easier for your child.
- Call your physician for a referral prior to or immediately after the visit to avoid billing issues with your insurance company.
- Remember that the Fast Track is part of an Emergency Department, and there may be a wait if patients with more serious conditions need immediate care.

FOR YOUR
Health

Healthy Living for You and Your Family

<http://www.lowellgeneral.org>

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After-Hours Care for Kids

It's Saturday evening and you suspect an ear infection is to blame for your toddler's painful cries. Waiting until your pediatrician's office opens Monday morning isn't an option, but you want someone who knows how to care best for kids. What's a parent to do?

When your pediatrician's office closes, the Pediatric Fast Track at Lowell General Hospital opens.

Your Option for After-Hours Pediatric Care

The Pediatric Fast Track is open evenings and weekends, staffed with specialty-trained pediatric nurse practitioners with expertise in caring for children younger than age 18. As part of the Lowell General Emergency Department, pediatric nurse practitioners assess and treat the same types of illnesses and conditions as your child's doctor during "sick visits" at the office. A full emergency medical team is available 24 hours a day in the Emergency Department for more serious or traumatic conditions.

"Many times, a child simply needs to be assessed to determine the proper treatment and prevent an illness from becoming more serious," says Wayne Pasanen, MD, Director of Emergency Services at Lowell General Hospital. "Our Pediatric Fast Track provides a resource for parents for their children when pediatrician offices are closed."

Pediatric nurse practitioners are



Our Pediatric Fast Track is staffed with specially-trained nurse practitioners, including Susan Boss, NP, to care for your child after hours.

specialized in pediatric medicine and are licensed exclusively to care for children. After completing their schooling and clinical training, they have successfully passed state board exams.

When to Come to the Pediatric Fast Track

If you think your child needs medical attention, your first step is to call your child's doctor, even if the office is closed. The physician on call will be able to recommend whether your child needs home care or a trip to the Fast Track or emergency room. ■