

For Your Health

Lowell General Hospital

www.lowellgeneral.org

SPRING 2006 • *Your resource for healthy living*

Join the Team!
TEAMWALK FOR
CANCERCARE

ACUTE SINUSITIS—
Take a Breather
this Spring

An Easier Solution for
VARICOSE VEINS

Rx for ADOLESCENT
SPORTS INJURIES



*Annie Blake,
Cancer Survivor
and TeamWalk for
CancerCare Participant*

Dear Friends,



Lowell General Hospital has a vision to be recognized as one of the best community hospitals in America. To fulfill this vision, we know we must establish

and achieve the highest standards of a community hospital to meet and exceed your expectations every day. This is a goal we will reach through our unwavering commitment to the five Pillars of Excellence on which our hospital is based:

■ **People.** To be the region's employer of choice. To develop and support a culturally diverse, competent, motivated, and productive workforce and medical staff.

■ **Service.** To provide an experience for patients, families, employees, and physicians that exceeds expectations.

■ **Quality.** To provide quality health care that can be defined, measured, and shared; invest in a culture of safety and make zero errors; offer programs, contemporary facilities, and state-of-the-art technology; and lead the community in improving community health status and access to care.

■ **Financial.** To be financially successful, and to support in advancing the mission and vision.

■ **Growth.** To be the hospital of choice for the community, offering a broad depth and breadth of services.

Through leadership, innovation, and collaboration, and through our commitment to these Pillars of Excellence, we will achieve our vision to make Greater Lowell a healthier place to live and work.

Sincerely,

NORMAND E. DESCHENE
PRESIDENT AND CEO

Join Us! TeamWalk for

A sea of walkers make their way toward the finish line—all with one goal in mind—to make a difference in the lives of local cancer patients. Parents and children, spouses and friends, co-workers and colleagues, everyone has a very personal reason for joining Lowell General Hospital's TeamWalk for CancerCare.

Whatever your reason, your generous support of TeamWalk for CancerCare will directly improve the quality of life for area cancer patients. What makes TeamWalk special is that all proceeds stay in the community to help The Cancer Center at Lowell General Hospital offer vital cancer treatments, services, and support to those fighting cancer. In addition, your TeamWalk dollars provide free cancer screenings to the public and preventative programs to area residents and businesses.

Over the past six years, your donations have helped area cancer patients in many ways. TeamWalk dollars provided more than 3,000 rides to and from cancer treatments last year alone, helping patients and families eliminate stressful transportation issues. When insurance wasn't enough, TeamWalk paid for lifesaving prescriptions, some costing

in excess of \$4,000 for a 30-day supply.

TeamWalk contributions have given hope to children whose families have been touched by cancer, funding support groups where they find comfort and answers to their questions.

Through the assistance of countless volunteers, walkers, and area businesses over the last six years, TeamWalk has improved the quality of life for thousands of area cancer patients and their families.

This year, pro golfer and LPGA Hall of Famer Pat Bradley returns to Lowell to serve as Honorary Chair of TeamWalk. The theme of TeamWalk each year is hope. You see it in the hundreds of cancer survivors wearing special TeamWalk shirts designating them as survivors. It's in the "Wall of Hope," a 40-foot beacon of hope, filled with inspiring messages from walkers about those they hold in their hearts that day. It's in the "Clothesline



Cammie Caron, LICSW, celebrates with members of the children's support groups at The Cancer Center.

CancerCare 2006



Many walkers celebrate their triumph over cancer, supported by friends and family.

of Love,” a stream of T-shirts strung across a clothesline at the Tsongas Arena, celebrating the faces and names of cancer patients and the teams supporting them. It’s seen most poignantly in the faces of cancer patients as they cross the finish line, where Lowell General Cancer Center staff greet them with medals and a heartfelt hug.

“It is certain that you have been touched by cancer in some way, through family, friends, or co-workers,” said Bruce Robinson, community chairman of TeamWalk. “What an incredible feeling of accomplishment you will have knowing that your time and your dollars directly help cancer patients.”

With your participation and support, the 7th annual TeamWalk for CancerCare will continue to make a difference. ●



On Sunday, May 21, thousands of people will gather at the Tsongas Arena in Lowell to celebrate the seventh annual TeamWalk for CancerCare.



Staff from The Cancer Center greet each cancer survivor at the finish line with a medal.

JOIN TEAMWALK FOR CANCERCARE

There are many ways you can make a difference:

- **Walk**—Walk as an individual or put together a team—big or small—and get ready for the experience of a lifetime!
- **Sponsor**—Sponsor an individual or team. Your support is priceless.
- **Volunteer**—Help make TeamWalk for CancerCare happen. Volunteering at the event is a fun and rewarding experience.
- **Donate to The Clothesline of Love**—Be part of the story of TeamWalk. Donate your team shirt to this heartwarming display by calling our TeamWalk hotline at 978-937-6434.

Lowell General Hospital



TeamWalk
For CancerCare

TEAMWALK FOR CANCERCARE—VITAL STATISTICS

What: Choose 3-mile or 6.2-mile walk, sponsor a walker, or volunteer at the event.

When: Sunday, May 21
9:30 a.m.—6.2-mile walk
10 a.m.—3-mile walk

Where: Starts and ends at the 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.

For more information, go to www.lowellgeneral.org and click on the TeamWalk logo!



LPGA Hall of Fame golfer Pat Bradley; cancer survivor and TeamWalk supporter Jerri Osborne; LGH President Norm Deschene; volunteer Nancy Guilbeault; TeamWalk chair Bruce Robinson, and Special Events Manager Nancy McCauley proudly display a check for \$430,842 at TeamWalk 2005.

Q & A: Acute Sinusitis—Take a Breather This Spring

with Sam Bhatt, MD, of Massachusetts ENT Associates

Do you have problem sinus congestion and pain that has dragged on for weeks after a cold or during allergy season? It could be sinusitis. Get the facts from Dr. Sam Bhatt on this condition that experts estimate affects 37 million Americans each year.

Q *My doctor told me I have acute sinusitis. What is that?*

A Sinusitis is an infection or inflammation of your sinuses, the four internal nasal air chambers located in the skull surrounding the nose—including the forehead and cheekbones. The two types of sinusitis seen most often are:

- acute sinusitis—occurring one to three times per year
- recurrent acute sinusitis—occurring consistently four or more times per year.

Q *Every year around this time I get sinusitis. What causes this?*

A Chances are you had a bad head cold or are prone to seasonal allergies at this time of year. These conditions can create a perfect breeding ground for acute sinusitis. Your body fights the offending cold virus or allergen by producing mucus and sending white blood cells to the membrane lining your nasal passages, which causes them to swell. When the swelling moves into your sinuses, the natural drainage system of your nose can get blocked, making the environment ripe for bacteria to multiply and cause a sinus infection.



If you have sinus infections frequently—more than four times in a year—you may have recurrent acute sinusitis. There are treatments that can help.

Q *My sinus problems are making me miserable. What should I do?*

A If you have had a cold that lasts more than two weeks, have a thick yellow or greenish nasal discharge, and have facial pain and pressure in your sinus area, go see your doctor. It is likely you have acute sinusitis and need an antibiotic to cure the infection. In addition, your doctor may recommend pain relievers and a decongestant or an antihistamine in the case of allergies. Inhaling steam from a vaporizer, using saline nasal spray, or applying gentle heat to the sinus area also may be recommended to ease your symptoms.

Q *Why does it seem like every time I turn around I have sinusitis, and now even antibiotics are having a hard time curing it?*

A If you have sinus infections more than four times a year, you may have recurrent acute sinusitis. While this type of

sinusitis can be treated with antibiotics, bacteria may become resistant, requiring even stronger and longer treatments. If frequent sinus infections severely impact your quality of life, you may want to consider surgery, which is much less drastic than it used to be. Minimally invasive endoscopic surgery accesses sinuses through the nasal passages using a delicate wand to only remove tissue necessary to reestablish natural drainage. Advanced 3-D image-guided navigational surgery is extremely effective in correcting complex problems, while minimizing the risk to close vital areas like the eyes and brain. ●



DR. BHATT, WHO IS BOARD CERTIFIED IN OTOLARYNGOLOGY—HEAD AND NECK SURGERY—IS A MEMBER OF THE HIGHLY-TRAINED GROUP OF EAR, NOSE, AND THROAT SPECIALISTS AT MASS ENT ASSOCIATES, 3 MEETING HOUSE

ROAD IN CHELMSFORD. THEY MAY BE REACHED BY CALLING 978-256-5557.

An Easier Solution to Varicose Veins

Do you have pain, swelling, and varicose veins in your legs? You're not alone: About 40 percent of all women and 25 percent of all men suffer from varicose veins.

Until now, solving the problem of varicose veins meant surgically removing, or stripping, the vein—a painful procedure with a lengthy recovery. Today, patients at Lowell General Hospital are finding relief easier than ever with laser vein ablation—a simple, minimally invasive alternative to surgery that gets you back to normal activity within a day, and without scars.

WHAT ARE VARICOSE VEINS?

Healthy leg veins contain valves that work against gravity, opening and closing to return blood from the legs back to the heart to be oxygenated. Varicose veins develop when the valves that keep blood flowing in superficial—close to the skin—veins become damaged or diseased. The damage can result from a number of factors, including age, heredity, prolonged standing, obesity, and trauma.

“As a result, valves do not close properly and fluid collects in the veins, causing them to enlarge and become varicose,” according to Paul Gryzenia, MD, one of several interventional radiologists at LGH. “In addition to being unsightly, the veins can cause pain and

discomfort and can make it very difficult to stand for more than brief periods. And if left untreated, varicose veins may lead to serious medical issues.”

HOW CAN YOU GET RELIEF?

In the past, the only option for varicose veins was surgery, requiring incisions in the groin and calf so the vein could be pulled out of the leg. The surgery typically left patients with two major incisions, as well as pain, swelling, and complications that kept them out of action for three weeks. With vein ablation, patients are essentially back to work and life the next day.

The procedure is performed in the Radiology Department by the interventional radiology team. Interventional radiologists have additional specialized training in doing diagnostic and therapeutic procedures using imaging guidance. They work with specially trained nurses and radiologic technologists as a coordinated team. Using ultrasound, the Lowell General interventional radiology team positions a thin catheter into the diseased vein through a tiny



The LGH Interventional Radiology team that performs laser vein treatment includes: Sherry Desrosiers RT(R), Interventional Technologist, Dr. Wei Du, Interventional Radiologist, and Maria Boisvert RT(R), Lead Interventional Technologist.

puncture in the skin. A stream of energy, generated by either a laser or radiofrequency (RF), is sent through the catheter, causing damage to the internal vein wall. As the catheter is withdrawn, the vein shrinks and closes. Once the diseased vein is closed, blood is rerouted to other healthy veins.

“We eliminate the diseased vein so that other healthy veins can take over,” said Jonas Berman, M.D., Chief of Radiology. “The interventional radiologists at Lowell General Hospital have performed over 300 of these procedures with a 95 percent success rate.”

Lisa Govoni, RN, a busy critical care nurse who needs to be on her feet much of her day, had been having difficulty standing for even a few minutes without pain and swelling in both of her legs.

“I was really amazed by this procedure,” she said. “It was so quick and I had relief from my symptoms right away. And on top of that, I feel a lot more comfortable wearing shorts and skirts again.” ●

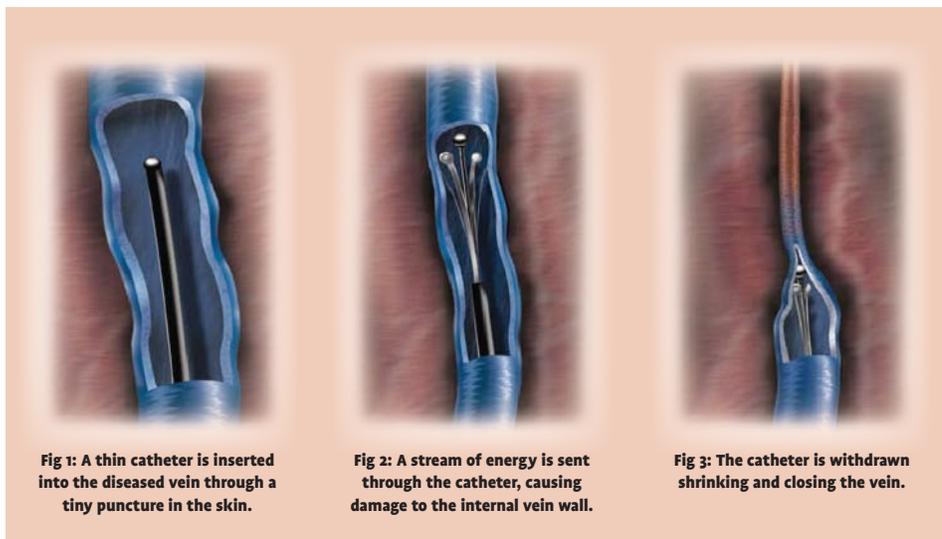


Fig 1: A thin catheter is inserted into the diseased vein through a tiny puncture in the skin.

Fig 2: A stream of energy is sent through the catheter, causing damage to the internal vein wall.

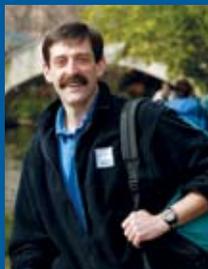
Fig 3: The catheter is withdrawn shrinking and closing the vein.

IS VEIN ABLATION RIGHT FOR YOU?

ASK YOUR PHYSICIAN. OR TAKE A QUIZ ABOUT VARICOSE VEINS AT WWW.LOWELLGENERAL.ORG.



Walking to Better Health



Join best-selling author and former Olympic race walker Mark Fenton for an entertaining and informative program on how walking can change your life. A nationally recognized expert in walking for well-being, Fenton is host of the series "America's Walking" on PBS television, a contributing editor to *Health* magazine, and author of several books, including *The Complete Guide to Walking for Health*, *Weight Loss*, and *Fitness* and *Pedometer Walking*. During the program you'll learn why physical activity matters, how to get started on a walking program yourself, and how to get friends, family, and even your community involved.

Date: Monday, May 8
Time: 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Location: Clark Auditorium, Lowell General Hospital
Sponsored by: The Greater Lowell Health Alliance. Registration is required at www.lowellgeneral.org or 1-877-LGH-WELL (877-544-9355).

Registration is required for all classes. Unless noted, you may register by calling 1-877-LGH-WELL (1-877-544-9355) or online at www.lowellgeneral.org.

Lowell General Hospital Support Groups

Lowell General Hospital offers many support groups that provide support and education to members of the community. For more information on the following support groups, call 1-877-LGH-WELL (1-877-544-9355) or visit www.lowellgeneral.org.

- **New Mothers Support Group**
- **Down Syndrome Support Group**
- **Arthritis Support Group**
- **Perinatal Loss Support Group**
Call 978-937-6324
- **Cancer Support Groups**
Call 978-937-6142

WELLNESS PROGRAMS

■ CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION

Lowell General Hospital invites you to participate in classes to give you a rewarding childbirth experience and help the entire family prepare for the birth of your newest family member. Lowell General offers **Prepared Childbirth** over six weeks or an accelerated one-day session; a **Refresher** class designed for parents who have previously had a baby; **Hypnobirthing** class; and a **Breastfeeding** class.

Please register early for all childbirth classes as many reach maximum enrollment several months before they begin.

■ PRENATAL YOGA

This seven-week prenatal yoga class will utilize 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 for this class. Women should be in their second or third trimester. Class is for expectant mothers only. Fee: \$70.

Meets seven Monday evenings; May 8 to June 19 or July 10 to August 21; 5:45 to 7 p.m.

■ INFANT MASSAGE

Parents learn special strokes and moves to soothe and stimulate babies ages 4 weeks to 6 months in a nurturing, bonding experience. Fee: \$70 (includes two sessions and instruction book). Call for upcoming dates.

■ SIBLING CLASS

This class provides children, ages 3 to 8, with the opportunity to explore their feelings concerning the arrival of a new baby. Children learn how to hold and diaper the infant and, together with their parents, tour The Birthplace to see where their new baby sister or brother will be born. Fee: \$20

Meets one Tuesday, May 9; 3:45 to 4:45 p.m.

■ BABY-SITTING BASICS

Designed to help develop baby-sitting skills for boys and girls age 10 and older. Topics include: basic safety issues, first aid, growth and development, baby-sitter activities, bottle-feeding, bath time and bedtime, care and handling of infants, and more. Fee: \$30.

Meets one Saturday, May 20, June 17, or July 15; 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

DIABETES MANAGEMENT

■ DIABETES LECTURE SERIES

Learn about the latest in diabetes management. Fee: \$5 per lecture. Registration is required.

■ Carbohydrate Counting—*May 10, noon to 1:30 p.m.*

■ Heart Disease and Diabetes—*June 14, noon to 1:30 p.m.*

COMPLEMENTARY CARE

Lowell General Hospital offers Complementary Care therapies including **Tai Chi**, **Guided Imagery**, **Meditation**, **Therapeutic Massage**, and **Yoga** to our Cancer Center patients. Call Carole Legro, MA, RNC, at 978-937-6396 for more information, to schedule an appointment, or to register.

■ YOGA OF THE HEART

Enjoy the stress reducing and strengthening benefits of yoga, even if you have health issues such as heart disease, cancer, and other debilitating diseases. This is a program of deep relaxation training and adapted yoga designed to help decrease blood pressure, boost immune function, improve clarity of mind, and lower heart rate. To register, call 978-937-6022.

This six-week class will be held Thursdays, May 18, 25, and Tuesdays, May 30, June 6, 13, 20; 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

State-Of-The-Art Radiation Therapy Now Offered at The Cancer Center

Advancements in technology continue to make cancer care easier and more effective. Now patients at The Cancer Center at Lowell General Hospital have access to a new state-of-the-art radiation treatment that offers a stronger, more individualized defense against hard-to-reach cancers.

Intensity modulated radiation therapy (IMRT) is a technological improvement in the ability to treat tumors. IMRT enables a more precise radiation dose to the tumor by varying the intensity and shape of the radiation beam. This technology allows higher and more effective radiation doses to be delivered to tumors with fewer side effects and less damage to surrounding normal tissue compared to conventional radiation therapy techniques.

"IMRT improves our ability to cure a patient while reducing the chance of side effects or complications," said Jeffrey Goldstein, Medical Director of Radiation Oncology at The Cancer Center. "It is a significant advancement in treating tumors

that are curved or in close proximity to critical tissues and organs, like the prostate or spine."

Previously, tumors near critical organs or body areas were difficult to reach without affecting the surrounding normal tissue. IMRT incorporates the use of 3D computer tomography (CT) scan images to precisely visualize the tumor and its relationship to surrounding vital organs and tissue. It provides a higher and more effective dose of radiation with fewer side effects than conventional radiation therapy.

The staff and physicians at The Cancer Center have been training and preparing for IMRT for several months. Lowell General invested in over \$1 million in equipment to offer the latest state-of-the-art technology to the Lowell community. A small portion was funded by the TeamWalk for CancerCare, which raises funds to benefit cancer patients at the center.

The Cancer Center has been able to develop their program quickly and effectively engaging the services of D3 Advanced Radiation Planning, a national consulting firm that specializes in IMRT implementation. "Having D3 behind us has allowed our IMRT program to hit the ground running," said Sherry Roberge, BSRT (R,T), Chief Radiation Therapist. "This partnership gives our patients the benefit of support from expert physicists and physicians experienced in treating thousands of patients nationwide."

"IMRT allows us to enhance our modalities and give patients state-of-the-art treatment options," said Claudia Rupp, RN, Director of Patient Services at The Cancer Center. "It's just another way for Lowell General Hospital to put patients first." ●



Dr. Jeffrey Goldstein, Medical Director of Radiation Oncology and Bill Crisp, Dosimetrist at The Cancer Center, use the innovative IMRT System to plan a patient's treatment.

New Physicians

Lowell general Hospital welcomes these new physicians to its outstanding medical staff.

Clara Keegan, MD



—Family Medicine with Obstetrics

A graduate of Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeon in New York, Dr. Clara Keegan

completed her residency in family medicine at University of Massachusetts Memorial Medical Center in Worcester. She is board certified in family medicine and provides family-centered maternity care. She is accepting new patients at Dracut Family Healthcare, 155 Broadway Road, Suite 6 in Dracut, at **978-458-0475**.

Laurel Scott, MD



—Pediatrics

Dr. Laurel Scott, who is board certified in pediatrics, graduated from Baylor College of Medicine, in Houston, and

completed her internship and residency in Pediatrics at Baylor College of Medicine Affiliated Hospitals. Contact Dr. Scott at Greater Lowell Pediatrics, 33 Bartlett Street in Lowell, at **978-452-2200**.

Michelle Sorensen, MD



—Pediatrics

After earning her doctorate in medicine at University of Minnesota Medical School, Dr. Michelle Sorensen completed

her residency in pediatrics at Oregon Health and Science University in Portland. Board certified in pediatrics, she is accepting new patients at Greater Lowell Pediatrics, 33 Bartlett Street in Lowell, at **978-452-2200**.

Rx for Adolescent Sports Injuries

Your daughter, the star of the basketball team, just sank the winning layup in the big game. But your cheers turn to gasps when you see she's on the floor, clutching her left knee.

She felt a pop when her foot hit the court. The orthopedic surgeon diagnoses a torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL). The treatment? Surgery and months of physical therapy.

TAKE SPORTS INJURIES IN YOUR CHILD SERIOUSLY

With more adolescents participating in organized sports, injuries are increasingly common. Many young people participate in multiple sports during the year with little downtime, increasing their risk for injury.

"Parents should be aware that the potential for injury is very real—and aware of how important it is that their children get the proper diagnosis and treatment," said Scott Sigman, MD, an orthopedic surgeon with Orthopaedic Surgical Associates and on staff at Lowell General Hospital.

Left untreated, some injuries can cause permanent damage and interfere with proper development.

"An untreated injury in a teenager can turn into a crippled joint in an adult," said Laurel Beverley, MD, an orthopedic surgeon at Merrimack Valley Orthopedics and also on staff at LGH. "The long-term consequences can be enormous."

HOW SPORTS INJURIES ARE TREATED

Here are some common sports injuries in adolescents—and their treatments:

Stress fractures. Adolescent athletes who push their bodies too hard risk microscopic fractures, especially in the lower legs and feet. They have pain—especially when walking—and swelling.

Doctors prescribe rest, and sometimes a removable brace or cast, for three to four weeks. Patients slowly return to normal activities.

■ **ACL tears.** Tears to the ACL often occur in sports with lots of jumping and changing directions. "Studies show that girls are more at risk because of the way they are built," says Dr. Sigman. "They're more likely to suffer stress across the knee joint."

Complete ACL tears require reconstructive surgery to replace the ligament. With six months of postoperative physical therapy, most patients have excellent results.

■ **Shoulder injuries.** Activities repeatedly performed overhead, like throwing a baseball, can cause injury to an already unstable shoulder. The muscles begin to tire and it may pop in and out of its joint.

Physical therapy strengthens the shoulder muscles. Recurrent problems may require surgery.

■ **Growth plate injuries.** The growth plate is the area of growing tissue near



Take your child's injuries seriously. Left untreated, injuries can cause permanent damage and may interfere with your child's development.

the end of the long bones in children and adolescents. Growth plates are prone to injury because they aren't as hard as solid bone. Pain in the knee, shoulder, or elbow also comes from overuse. Doctors prescribe rest and anti-inflammatory medication, typically for three to six weeks.

Physicians generally avoid surgery in children and adolescents whenever possible. "But when needed, many can be done with arthroscopy, a less-invasive technique that offers many benefits, including less postoperative pain and chance for complications," said Dr. Beverley. ●

FOR HELP WITH A SPORTS-RELATED INJURY, CONTACT MERRIMACK VALLEY ORTHOPAEDIC SURGICAL ASSOCIATES AT 978-275-9650 OR OF LOWELL AT 978-454-0706.

NEED A DOCTOR? CALL OUR PHYSICIAN REFERRAL LINE AT 1-877-LGH-WELL (1-877-544-9355) OR VISIT WWW.LOWELLGENERAL.ORG.



LOWELL GENERAL HOSPITAL

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