

LOWELL GENERAL HOSPITAL

for your health

Winter 2006 • *Your resource for healthy living*



LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON
LGH Father /Son Physicians

GERD: DON'T IGNORE
This Burning Issue

TIRED, CRAMPED LEGS
May Be Sign of Heart Troubles

BRINGING UP BABY
Birth and Beyond—LGH Is Here

www.lowellgeneral.org

For Your Health giveaway...
for a healthier you!
Enter to win a FREE one-year gym
membership for you
and your family!
See page 6.

Dear Friends,



When you commit your life to health care, your satisfaction comes not from awards and outside recognitions, but rather from the appreciation of the people you help.

With that said, Lowell General Hospital recently received several recognitions that meant a great deal to me and to our staff. Each of them, in a different way, affirms that we are fulfilling our commitment to protect and improve our community's health.

■ Lowell General Hospital and Lowell Community Health Center were recently honored at Community Teamwork, Inc.'s annual "Evening of Heroes." LGH founded the Health Center 35 years ago with a vision to ensure that all members of our community have access to caring, quality, and culturally appropriate health services.

■ LGH was one of only 55 hospitals in the entire country to be recognized by the American Heart Association for success in using national guidelines to measurably improve quality of care for patients with coronary artery disease and heart failure.

■ Lowell General Hospital physicians—including those of the Lowell General Physician Hospital Organization and Harvard Vanguard Medical Associates in Chelmsford—were named to Harvard Pilgrim Health Care's 2005 "Physician Group Honor Roll" in recognition of outstanding commitment to quality. They were among only five medical groups in the entire state to achieve all 10 of the national quality measures for adult care.

We consider the successes of the past quarter the latest building blocks as we work toward a stronger Lowell General Hospital for you and your family, now and for generations to come.

Sincerely,

NORMAND E. DESCHENE
PRESIDENT AND CEO

Like Father, Like Son

Sons of LGH Physicians Follow in

For three Lowell General Hospital doctors, their fathers' love of medicine and caring for others has led them to follow in their fathers' paths.

When Jonathan Drake was 5 years old, he wrote a note to his father that said, "Daddy, I want to take care of sick people, too. Maybe someday I'll be a doctor like you." Fast forward 20 years to the Drake household on Christmas, where Jonathan—now Jonathan Drake, MD—opened his Christmas gift from his parents: the framed note he had sent his dad two decades before.

Milton and Jonathan Drake are just one of three father-son teams on the staff of Lowell General Hospital. In each son's case, he went away to school, explored other career opportunities and locations, but ultimately came back to practice medicine alongside dad—his role model as a man and a physician. And for these fathers, their pride for what their sons have accomplished as physicians is surpassed only by their pride for whom they have become as men.

MILTON DRAKE, MD, INTERNIST, HARVARD VANGUARD MEDICAL ASSOCIATES, AND JONATHAN DRAKE, MD, ER PHYSICIAN, LGH

When Jonathan Drake was growing up, it was common to have one or more of his father's patients seated at the family table on Thanksgiving or Christmas. In his father's eyes, if his patients had no family, they were welcome to be part of his.

"Watching my father through the years, I learned that being a doctor is as much about dignity, respect, and compassion as it is about expertise," says Jonathan. "He is the consummate doctor. He sees it as a life, not a job."

Milton Drake never pushed his son toward a career in medicine, but admits he was delighted at his choice. "It's hard to

put into words how you feel when you see your son dedicate his life to such a noble profession," he says. "He's a good doctor, and I'm incredibly proud. But more than that, he's a wonderful son and man and father, and I'm more proud of him for that."

IRVING NEWMAN, MD, AND DAVID NEWMAN, DO, PEDIATRICIANS, CHELMSFORD PEDIATRICS

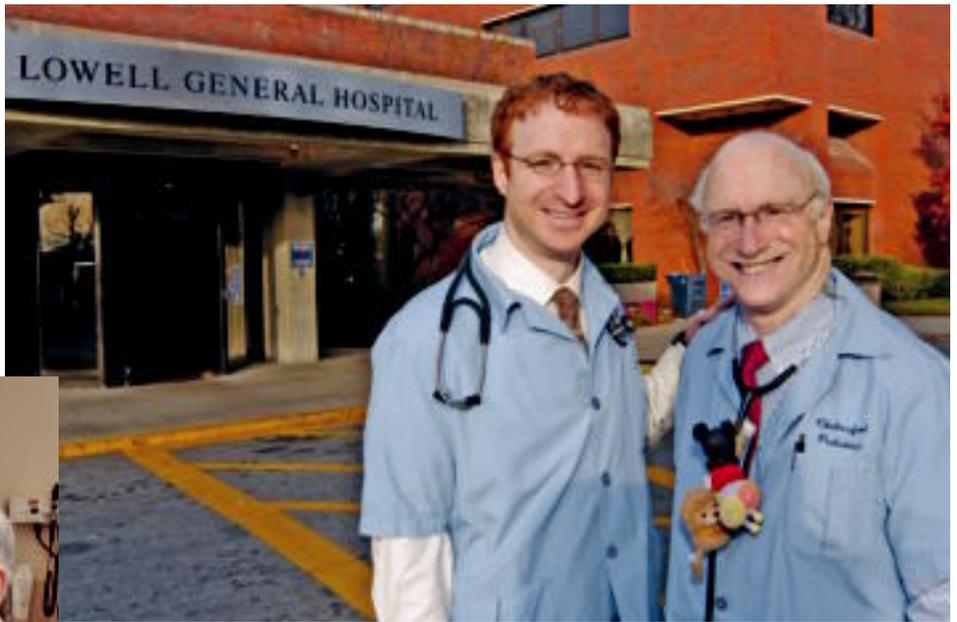
When David Newman was about three or four years old, his dad asked him and his older brother what they wanted to be when they grew up. Having seen how his father helped children as a pediatrician, David's brother said, "I want to be just like you, Dad." David responded that he wanted to be a moose.

David's brother went on to become a respected child advocate. At some point David abandoned his goal of becoming a moose and surprised his father—and himself—by enrolling in medical school for pediatrics.

Two years ago, medical degree in hand, David returned home to practice alongside his father. "We have a whole new relationship now," says Irving Newman. "We have different personalities and different styles and we bring different experience and points of view to our work. Maybe that's why it works so well."

Once David decided on his career path, he knew he wanted to return home to practice. "It's great to give back to a place and to the people who have given so much to you," he says. "My father is a great role model. I still learn from him every day."

Fathers' Footsteps



"I still learn from him every day," says David Newman, DO, of his father, Irving Newman, MD.



"My dad taught me that being a physician is a life, not a job," says Jonathan Drake, MD, with father Milton Drake, MD.



Mark Gilchrist, MD, with father Michael Gilchrist, MD. "I always dreamed of one day working side by side with my dad."

MICHAEL GILCHRIST, MD, AND MARK GILCHRIST, MD, PEDIATRICIANS, THE PRACTICE OF DRs. GILCHRIST AND SEVIGNY

Mike Gilchrist didn't think he could be more proud of his son, Mark. Graduating with a degree in religious studies, Mark was considering a life in the clergy. But then one day Mark informed his dad that he was in fact being called to a life in ministry—through medicine. He was going to follow his father's footsteps and become a pediatrician.

In November, Mark joined his father at his Chelmsford practice. "He's never pushed me one way or the other," says Mark. "But he has always been there to

support me as an advisor, a father, and a role model. There's no one I respect more as a man or as a pediatrician than my father."

Mike Gilchrist sees their lives as coming full circle. "As my patients have grown up and had children of their own, I am now treating a second generation of children," he says. "Now our patients are seeing a second generation of doctors. My life's work is now twice as rewarding." ●

LOOKING FOR A DOCTOR FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY? CALL OUR FREE PHYSICIAN REFERRAL LINE AT 1-877-LGH-WELL (1-877-544-9355) OR VISIT WWW.LOWELLGENERAL.ORG.

Q & A: GERD—Don't Ignore This Burning Issue

with Dennis Rassias, MD

Concerned about GERD? Find out what can be done to help soothe symptoms from Dr. Rassias.

Q *My doctor told me I have GERD, what does that mean?*

A GERD stands for gastroesophageal reflux disease. It is a chronic condition that can cause painful symptoms, including frequent heartburn.

Q *What causes GERD?*

A GERD is caused by stomach acid that backs up into the esophagus, the tube that carries food from your mouth to your stomach.

In some people, the lower esophageal sphincter (LES)—the muscle between the stomach and the esophagus—becomes weak or doesn't close properly. When this happens, stomach acid tends to flow back up into the esophagus, causing the familiar burning pain in the center of your chest associated with heartburn and GERD.

Q *How serious is GERD?*

A GERD can turn into a very serious issue over time. Stomach acids can damage the lining of the esophagus, causing esophagitis—or an inflammation of the esophagus.

If left untreated, GERD can cause severe damage to the lining of the esophagus, including scarring, inflammation, ulcers, bleeding, and narrowing. GERD also may lead to Barrett's esophagus, a disorder of the cells lining the esophagus. About five to 10 percent of people with Barrett's esophagus develop esophageal cancer.

Q *What can I do to treat GERD?*

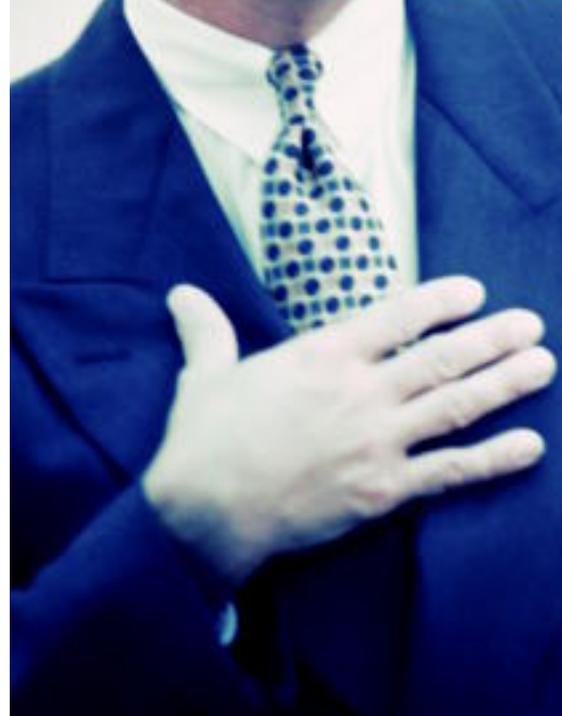
A Healthy lifestyle choices can often relieve symptoms of GERD, including losing weight and not smoking. Also, cutting out irritants—alcohol and caffeinated drinks and fatty, acidic, or spicy foods—can help.

Q *What if lifestyle changes aren't enough?*

A Your doctor may put you on medication. You may start off with an over-the-counter antacid to ease your symptoms. Medicines called "histamine-2 receptor antagonists," available over the counter or by prescription, also can help to cut acid in the stomach. If you have a more serious case of GERD, your doctor may suggest medications called proton pump inhibitors, which actually turn off acid-producing pumps in your stomach.

Q *Can GERD require surgery?*

A If you do not respond well to drug therapy or are going to require lifelong medication, surgery can be an effective alternative for GERD. A surgical treatment called fundoplication—also called reflux, or anti-reflux surgery—can be used to reinforce the LES to prevent acid reflux into the esophagus.



Not drinking caffeinated beverages, such as coffee, may help relieve your GERD symptoms.

This procedure may be performed using a minimally invasive laparoscopic technique, which should lessen your hospital stay and recovery time. ●

LEFT UNCHECKED, GERD CAN LEAD TO OTHER MORE SERIOUS CONDITIONS, AND MORE EXTENSIVE SURGERY MAY BE REQUIRED. IF YOU THINK YOU HAVE GERD, SEE YOUR DOCTOR OR CALL 1-877-LGH-WELL (1-877-544-9355) TO FIND A PHYSICIAN.

DR. RASSIAS SPECIALIZES IN GENERAL AND CARDIOTHORACIC SURGERY AT DRUM HILL SURGICAL ASSOCIATES IN NORTH CHELMSFORD, WHERE HE IS ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS. HE MAY BE CONTACTED BY CALLING 978-937-8055.

The Endoscopy Center at Lowell General Hospital specializes in endoscopic procedures to help detect stomach and gastrointestinal problems such as GERD, polyps, tumors, ulcers, and other diseases and disorders, and to screen for colon cancer. This state-of-the-art facility includes three procedure rooms, and 11 preparation and recovery bays, specially designed for patient privacy and comfort. For more information on The Endoscopy Center, visit www.lowellgeneral.org.

Giving to Lowell General Is Giving to Your Health



"Giving to Lowell General Hospital is a direct investment into our community's most valuable resource—its people." —Elaine Zouzas-Thibault, member of LGH Governing Board, former President of the LGH Auxiliary, and donor

Philanthropy has always been the cornerstone of our success at Lowell General Hospital. It's a simple fact: Without the generosity demonstrated by the businesses and individuals of Greater Lowell, our community would not have access to the level of health care that we do now. It is through their giving—through your giving—that we are able to go about our business of saving lives, bringing new life into the world, and improving

the health of our community.

Each year we hold several exciting events to help us in that cause, and each year we are heartened and overwhelmed by the support you have given us.

Lowell General Hospital needs your full support as we continue our commitment to become one of the best community hospitals in America. There are many ways of giving. We welcome your donations, time, and energy. ●

INAUGURAL BLACK-TIE FUNDRAISER FOR A HEALTHIER FUTURE

You are invited to join us for a smashing black-tie event at the Lowell Memorial Auditorium on **March 4, 2006**. It promises to be the "must go" event of the season—and all for a great cause. The event represents a partnership among Lowell General Hospital, the LGH medical staff, and the community in an effort to support innovative initiatives to improve the health of the Greater Lowell community. Check out our website for details on how and where to get your tickets.

THANKS TO THOSE WHO TEED OFF FOR CARDIAC CARE

We tip our hats—and clubs—to the hundreds of participants who made the 2005 LGH Golf Challenge the most successful in 10 years. Through the generosity of 208 golfers and 127 corporate and individual sponsors, we raised over \$216,000 for Cardiac Care Services. The tournament was played in honor of Kendall M. Wallace, Chairman of the Lowell Sun Publishing Company and a longtime LGH trustee. Kendall's unparalleled commitment to his community has inspired others to do the same. Our 2006 LGH Challenge will be on **Monday, September 11**. We'll see you there!

AMAZING PARTICIPATION AT THE TEAMWALK FOR CANCERCARE

In May 2005, we celebrated our most successful TeamWalk for CancerCare. Nearly 4,000 walkers, volunteers, and corporate sponsors joined together to raise over \$430,000 to benefit the patients at The Cancer Center at Lowell General. The donations provided much-needed equipment, support programs, and financial assistance to ease the burden of those dealing with cancer. Join us for this year's TeamWalk on **May 21, 2006**. Visit www.lowellgeneral.org to learn how to form a team, gather sponsors, and recruit your company to support the walk.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN GIVE, VISIT WWW.LOWELLGENERAL.ORG. OR CALL NANCY MCCAULEY, SPECIAL EVENTS MANAGER, AT 978-937-6267, OR LISA ALECCI, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT, AT 978-937-6430.

New Physicians

We welcome the following new physicians to our outstanding medical staff.

Mark Gilchrist, MD



—Pediatrics

A graduate of Loyola University Chicago School of Medicine, Dr. Mark Gilchrist completed his residency at Arnold Palmer

Hospital for Children and Women, in Orlando.

He joins the pediatric practice of his father, Michael Gilchrist, MD, and associate Lisa Seigny, MD, at their 4 Meeting House Road office in Chelmsford. He may be reached at 978-250-4081.

Amy Lee, MD



—Family Medicine

Dr. Amy Lee graduated from Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston, where she also completed her residency in family medicine. She

is board certified in family medicine and remains a member of the family medicine teaching faculty at Tufts. Dr. Lee joins Blackwell Center for Family Medicine, 275 Varnum Avenue, in Lowell. She may be reached at 978-452-6447.

Dennis Rassias, MD



—Cardiothoracic and General Surgery

After completing his internship and residency in general surgery at Columbia University College of Physicians

and Surgeons in Stamford, CT, Dr. Dennis Rassias completed a residency in cardiothoracic surgery at Albany Medical College, NY. He is board certified in general surgery by the American College of Surgeons. Dr. Rassias joins Drum Hill Surgical Associates, 10 Research Place, North Chelmsford, and may be reached at 978-937-8055.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WINTER 2006

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 lowellgeneral.org.

- New Mothers Support Group
 - Down Syndrome Support Group
 - Arthritis Support Group
 - Perinatal Loss Support Group
- Call 978-937-6324

Cancer Support Groups

The Cancer Center at Lowell General Hospital provides many cancer support groups to provide support and education to cancer patients, their families, and friends. For a complete listing and descriptions of all Cancer Center support groups, visit www.lowellgeneral.org. Unless noted, you may register for all Cancer Center support groups by calling 978-937-6142.

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.

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; 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, February 14, March 14, April 11, or 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, January 21, February 11, March 18, April 15, or May 20; 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

■ 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.
Meets seven Wednesday evenings starting January 25; 6 to 7:30 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.

For Your Health Giveaway... for a Healthier You

In For Your Health, you get the latest information on healthy living, diets, exercise, and medical advancements in your community, keeping up on important information that can make a real difference in your life. As a reward for taking such an active role in keeping healthy, you are invited to enter our For Your Health giveaway. Enter to win a FREE one-year single or family membership to the area health club of your choice! Register today at www.lowellgeneral.org/fyh.



Tired, Cramped Legs: A Warning Sign of ... Heart Troubles?

Learn about peripheral arterial disease (PAD), who's at risk, and what simple self-care measures you can take.

Without even knowing it, you could have a common condition that multiplies your risk of dying of a heart attack or stroke. PAD is caused by fatty buildup in the arteries. This buildup blocks circulation to the legs and feet. The same process of artery clogging also may be affecting the arteries to your heart and brain.

PAD often begins without symptoms. Eventually, though, many sufferers experience cramps or fatigue in their hips, buttocks, thighs, calves, or feet when they walk. These symptoms typically ease while resting.

"It's important to recognize the symptoms of PAD because it is an underdiagnosed disease," says Kirk MacNaught, MD, an interventional cardiologist on staff at Lowell General Hospital who treats patients with PAD. "People often mistakenly assume their leg pain is caused by arthritis or is a normal part of aging."

WHO'S AT RISK?

The risk for PAD increases with age. Men face a higher risk than women. Other risk factors include:

- diabetes
- high cholesterol
- smoking
- obesity
- physical inactivity.

If you experience symptoms of PAD, talk to your doctor. He or she will perform a physical exam and a painless test that compares the blood pressure in your feet with the blood pressure in your arms to see how well the blood is flowing. Your physician may order additional tests that can provide more

information about the nature and extent of the problem, Dr. MacNaught says.

LIVING WITH PAD

A healthy lifestyle can help slow the progression of PAD and cut your risk for a heart attack, stroke, or other problems. Exercise is key. Walk for at least 30 minutes every other day. Walk until it hurts, rest for a few minutes, and then walk some more. Rest assured that the pain won't do any damage. And if you smoke, quitting will go a long way toward preventing future cardiovascular troubles.

A diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol can help people with PAD lower their blood cholesterol. Certain medications and procedures, including angioplasty and stents, also are effective in treating PAD. For some patients, surgery may be necessary, Dr. MacNaught says.



Walking for 30 minutes every other day can help PAD. Be sure to rest a few minutes if it begins to hurt, and then resume walking.

"People with PAD should understand that there are many treatments that can help improve their quality of life." ●

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PAD AND ITS TREATMENT, VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.LOWELLGENERAL.ORG.



Women's Heart Advantage

WOMEN'S WEEK—EMPOWER YOUR HEART PROGRAM

FREE!

Join us for another special Women's Heart Advantage evening program that will help women empower their hearts by putting in place healthy lifestyle choices. Heart conscious cooking demonstrations from local chefs and our dietary specialists will demonstrate how to make your meals delicious and heart healthy.

Exercise specialists will share tips and demonstrate ways to incorporate exercises into your lifestyle that will get your heart pumping and relieve stress.

Be sure to bring your appetite for delectable taste testing and your sneakers to join the exercise fun.

THE WOMEN'S HEART ADVANTAGE:

Women's Week—Empower Your Heart Program

Date: Monday, March 6th

Time: 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Location: Lowell General Hospital. Co-sponsored by the Visiting Nurse Association of Greater Lowell.

Registration is required for this FREE workshop. For more information or to register, call 1-877-LGH-WELL (1-877-544-9355).

Bringing Up Baby: Birth and Beyond — LGH Is Here

Lactation consultants and support groups help new mothers and newborns get off to a great start.

Thanks to the guidance his mom received at Lowell General Hospital, Peter Meconi got a great start in life. “I wouldn’t have been successful at nursing if not for the lactation consultants at LGH,” says his mother, Jennifer Meconi.

One of the key reasons Meconi chose LGH, where Peter was born last December, was that the hospital offered extra help with breastfeeding. Before giving birth, she took the breastfeeding class and childbirth preparation class at LGH, which are often covered by insurance, to make sure she and her baby had a good head start. After giving birth to Peter, the new mother met with lactation consultants in the hospital.

HOME VISITS, OUTPATIENT CLINIC ASSIST WITH BREASTFEEDING

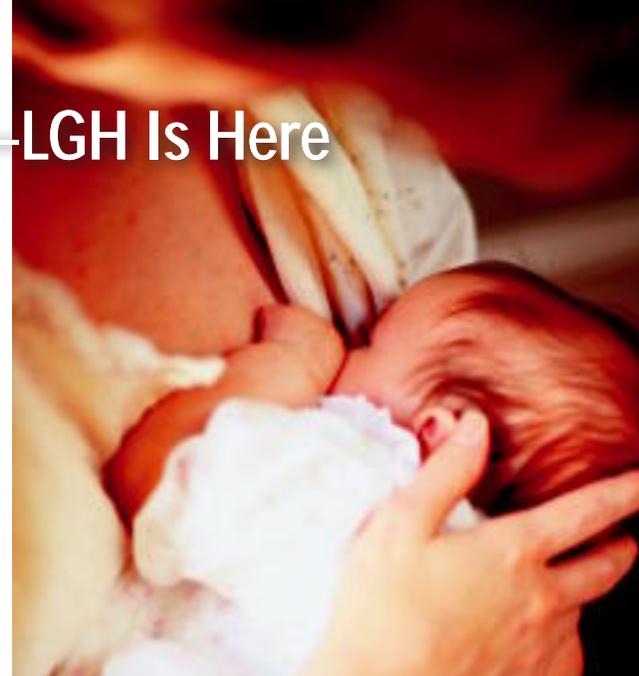
As a newborn, Peter had difficulty getting used to breastfeeding, and Meconi was unsure how to build up her milk supply. Meconi began attending the outpatient breastfeeding clinic at LGH to help with those typical early breastfeeding problems. After several one-on-one sessions with the hospital’s certified lactation consultants, along with some home nursing visits, both Peter and his mom were much more comfortable with the entire breastfeeding process.

SUPPORT GROUP FOR NEW MOMS IS ADDED BENEFIT

Two weeks after Peter was born, he and his mom also began attending Lowell General’s New Mothers Support Group,

which meets every Tuesday morning from 10 a.m. to noon. This group, which attracts eight to 15 mother-infant pairs each week, is FREE and open to new mothers without registration. Meconi appreciates that the three women who facilitate the group meetings are all certified lactation consultants, registered nurses, and moms.

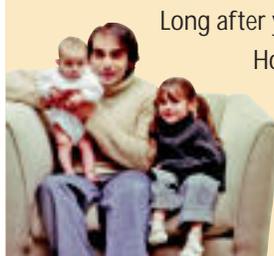
“The weekly discussion ranges over many topics. Questions about breastfeeding typically come up, and some of the moms also want to talk about bottle feeding,” says Doreen Gallant, RN, IBCLC, a certified lactation consultant who facilitates the group along with Laurie Sanz, RN, IBCLC, and Susan Santos, RN, IBCLC. She says the group discusses when to start solid foods, going back to work, and sleeping problems. Gallant says the group occasionally features a guest speaker, such as a nutritionist. “The best part is that new mothers get to meet other moms who have gone through the same things they’re going through.” ●



Lowell General Hospital provides lactation consultants for new mothers to assist them with their newborn at home and at the hospital.

LGH OFFERS A VARIETY OF OTHER CLASSES AND SUPPORT GROUPS FOR NEW PARENTS, INCLUDING PRENATAL CHILDBIRTH EDUCATION AND BREASTFEEDING CLASSES, INPATIENT AND OUTPATIENT LACTATION CONSULTATION, AND THE NEW MOTHERS SUPPORT GROUP. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT WWW.LOWELLGENERAL.ORG, OR CALL 1-877-LGH-WELL (1-877-544-9355).

OUR SUPPORT PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES



Long after you take your new baby home, you can count on Lowell General Hospital for information and support. Parents can enroll for the infant massage class to learn to soothe and stimulate babies from 1 to 6 months old. Sibling classes offer older children the chance to tour The Birthplace and explore their feelings about becoming big brothers and sisters.

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

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