

ABBOTT NORTHWESTERN HOSPITAL

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ESOPHAGEAL CANCER

A difficult surgery made easier



Photo by Richard Anderson

FOR RICK MEYER, life is both busy and satisfying. The 53-year-old father of two enjoys his work as a tire wholesaler and is a power parachute enthusiast who often flies his ultralight aircraft near his hobby farm in Loretto, Minn.

But after a week of hunting in October 2006, Meyer was inexplicably exhausted and sought help from his doctor.

Meyer's symptoms led the doctor to suspect internal bleeding. After tests at Abbott Northwestern Hospital, Meyer learned he had esophageal cancer. "I was plenty scared, but I felt better once I knew we had a plan," says Meyer.

"Esophageal cancer is an uncommon but intense disease," says Daniel Dunn, MD,

A lucky man. After robotic surgery at Abbott Northwestern and treatment at the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute, Rick Meyer is cancer-free and back to flying his power parachute.

a surgeon with Surgical Specialists of Minnesota and the medical director of the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute's Esophageal and Gastric Cancer Program.

It often requires aggressive treatment that must be coordinated among many medical specialists as well as rehabilitation and nutrition experts. At the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute, esophageal cancer is treated by a team of specialists who use current clinical research in their practice and who constantly

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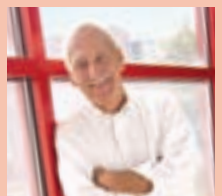
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ABBOTT NORTHWESTERN HOSPITAL
Allina Hospitals & Clinics

HEALTH UPDATE

ABBOTT NORTHWESTERN HOSPITAL



Abbott Northwestern Hospital builds community with National Night Out

When neighbors know their neighbors, the community as a whole benefits. That's the idea behind National Night Out, a nationwide effort to encourage neighborhood block parties and fight crime.

For the past 11 years, Abbott Northwestern Hospital has helped host the annual Phillips neighborhood block party, one of the biggest in Minnesota. This year, organizers closed East 27th Street between Columbus and Portland avenues and served 1,500 hot dogs and other picnic fare. Participants also visited informational displays provided by a variety of organizations and enjoyed dancing and a mariachi band.

Not only does the event draw hundreds of residents, but it also allows the hospital to build relationships with other community organizations and businesses. The neighborhood situation has improved over the past 10 years, but the hospital remains committed to the event. "It is important to maintain our connections in the community and support any efforts that allow neighbors to get to know each other," says Daryl Schroeder, vice president of Operations at Abbott Northwestern. ❖

Sign up for free e-newsletter on women's heart health

Subscribe to *Heart Notes*, a free e-newsletter published by the Minneapolis Heart Institute's® Women's Heart Health Program, and learn how to protect your heart health.

Heart Notes offers stories about women coping with heart disease, an "Ask the Expert" column, and tips on nutrition, exercise, stress management

and other topics. You can see the latest issue at www.mplsheart.com. Go to *Programs & Services* and scroll down to the *Women's Heart Health Program*. Follow the links on the left side of the *Heart Notes* page to sign up for the newsletter. ❖



Make your health care wishes known

Today it is very important that you discuss your health care wishes with those who are close to you, such as your family and doctor, in case you unexpectedly become incapable of making your own decisions due to illness or injury. One way to do this is by completing an advance care plan.

An advance care plan does not take the place of a legal document like a health care directive, but its contents are accessible to Allina Hospitals & Clinics' caregivers through Allina's electronic medical record system.

According to Kathy Shibrowski, RN, advance care planning facilitator, Allina Hospice & Palliative Care, "Advance care planning is a way for patients to express their choices and values about end-of-life care and a way for their loved ones to listen, understand and commit to honoring their wishes. You should plan for the end of your life as you would any major life transition. It is a life event like marriage or the birth of a baby."

For more information or to schedule an appointment with an advance care planning facilitator, call Allina Hospice & Palliative Care at 651-635-9173. ❖





Make the right moves to avoid knee injuries



AS A SINGLE PARENT with two children, Katherine Smith, 34, doesn't have time for debilitating knee pain.

Unfortunately, growing numbers of women probably feel the same way. Because of differences in anatomy, muscle strength, joint flexibility and hormonal influences, women are more susceptible to certain knee problems and other orthopaedic issues than men.

Smith has been active all her life and enjoys biking, swimming and soccer. But knee pain that began nine years ago made it increasingly difficult to participate in the activities she loved—much less keep up with two young children.

Over the years, she had several injections and minor surgeries

on the knee, but the pain kept returning.

Then she was referred to Aimee Klapach, MD, an orthopaedic surgeon with Sports & Orthopaedic Specialists. Klapach recommended surgery at Abbott Northwestern Hospital to correct a misalignment of her kneecap.

As more women become involved in athletics or pursue increasingly active lifestyles, it has become clear that they have different orthopaedic needs than men. Yet there is little research to help doctors understand and treat women's orthopaedic issues.

The challenge of treating women's orthopaedic problems has led Klapach and her colleague, Lisa Wasserman, MD, to establish the Women's Orthopaedic Center at Sports & Orthopaedic Specialists.

“Our concept is to get more research on issues pertinent to women,” says Klapach.

Smith's knee problem, patellofemoral pain syndrome, is more common in women than men, and determining the exact cause can be challenging, she says. “This is a complex condition with a variety of causes, so it requires careful diagnosis and treatment. There is no clear process to follow in treating it,” says Klapach.

Another knee problem that is more common in women is noncontact anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injury, a tearing of one of the major knee ligaments.

Women may be more vulnerable to the injury because of weaker hamstring muscles and less muscle and ligament support around the knee. Body core weakness can also play a role.

Smith's surgery was in May 2008, and she noticed an immediate improvement. She has resumed her active lifestyle, “but I know what my limits are and what I should and should not do,” she says. “I can't afford to be immobilized by pain.” ❖

Tips for women

Practice these tips to avoid knee injuries:

- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Strengthen core muscles.
- Strengthen quadriceps and hamstrings using exercises in which the foot remains in constant contact with the floor or base of the weight machine.
- Avoid exercises that stress the knee, such as leg extensions.
- Wear proper shoes.
- Stay active.
- See a doctor promptly if you develop knee pain.



THE FIRST SIGNS OF STROKE CALL FOR A QUICK RESPONSE—FAST TREATMENT MATTERS

Don't wait, don't hesitate—it's important to get help at the first signs of stroke.

A race against time

WHEN A STROKE happens, there's no time to waste. During a stroke, the brain's supply of blood is disrupted, leaving brain cells without crucial oxygen and nutrients. As a result, they can quickly start to die. This makes treating a stroke a race against time.

Damage from a stroke can affect any part of the body. Strokes can result in serious disabilities, including paralysis and problems with speaking, thinking and emotions.

"While every stroke is different, it is critical that patients get to a hospital that is prepared to treat

their stroke as an emergency," says Ronald Tarrel, DO, co-director of the Abbott Northwestern Hospital Stroke Program. "Stroke can have a devastating impact on the patient, as well as on those who care about him or her."

But here's what else you need to know: By recognizing the signs of a stroke and getting to the hospital right away, you can receive treatment that can limit the damage from a stroke.

KNOW THE SUDDEN SIGNS

Stroke symptoms come on suddenly—at any time and place. Signs of stroke may include:

- numbness or weakness of the

face, arm or leg—especially on only one side of the body

- confusion or trouble speaking or understanding speech
- trouble seeing
- trouble walking, dizziness, or loss of balance or coordination
- severe headache for no obvious reason.

If you think you or someone else might be having a stroke, call 911. Don't wait to see if the symptoms pass.

WHY TIME IS SO CRUCIAL

Most strokes happen when there is a blockage in an artery that sends blood to the brain—an ischemic stroke.

National recognition for stroke care, rehab

Programs at Abbott Northwestern Hospital that provide stroke treatment and rehabilitation have recently achieved national recognition for the quality of their services.

CENTER OF EXCELLENCE FOR STROKE CARE

Abbott Northwestern's Neuroscience Institute has been designated a Stroke Center of Excellence according to a survey sponsored by the Chicago-based think tank NeuStrategy.

Hospitals complying with the American Stroke Association's recommendations for stroke care rank high in the survey and qualify for NeuStrategy's Stroke Center of Excellence designation.

"This study reinforces how the right hospital choice can significantly reduce a stroke patient's risk of death or a crippling long-term disability," says Mandy Richards, director of the Neuroscience Institute.

Abbott Northwestern is also a Joint Commission Primary Stroke Center, which indicates that it follows national



standards and guidelines that can significantly improve outcomes for stroke patients.

For information about stroke care at Abbott Northwestern, visit www.abbottnorthwestern.com.

Go to *Services & Programs* and look for *Neuroscience Institute* under *Centers of Excellence*.

CARF ACCREDITATION FOR STROKE REHABILITATION

Sister Kenny® Rehabilitation Institute received accreditation from CARF International for its stroke specialty programs at Abbott Northwestern. CARF International was founded in 1966 as the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. Now known as CARF, it is an independent, not-for-profit accrediting body whose mission is to promote the quality, value and optimal outcomes

of services through a consultative accreditation process that centers on enhancing the lives of the people served.

To receive a three-year CARF accreditation, the Institute put itself through a rigorous peer review process that included a visit by a team of surveyors.

"It is the highest level of accreditation that can be awarded to an organization like ours and reflects the passion of our doctors, nurses and therapists to help people live their best possible lives," says Karl Sandin, MD, MPH, medical and interim executive director of the Institute.

For information about stroke rehabilitation services, go to www.sisterkennyinstitute.com. Go



to *Services & Programs* and scroll down to the links under *Stroke*.

Doctors can use a drug called tPA to restore blood flow and stop this type of stroke, often limiting disability. Again, there's no time to waste, because the drug needs to be given quickly to do the most good.

From the time stroke symptoms start, doctors have a three-hour window to begin treatment with tPA.

However, you should make every effort to get to the hospital much sooner than that—within 60 minutes—says the National

Institutes of Health. During part of the three-hour window, doctors must first evaluate you and determine what kind of stroke you're having and whether it can be treated with tPA.

The bottom line: Know the signs of a stroke, and get to the hospital quickly if you think you or someone else might be having a stroke.

PREVENTION POINTERS

Of course, the best scenario is to

avoid a stroke in the first place.

With your doctor's help, you can lower your risk by taking these steps:

- Keep your blood pressure and cholesterol levels controlled.
- Quit smoking, or don't start.
- If you have diabetes or heart disease, keep it in check.
- Maintain a healthy weight.

For more on stroke prevention, visit www.allina.com, go to



Conditions & Treatments, then to *Stroke* in the *Condition Centers* list. ❖



ABBOTT NORTHW

To register or for more information, visit www.allina.com or call Allina Class



HEALTH CLASSES, COMING EVENTS

Visit www.allina.com/classes
or call 612-262-3333.

CANCER

*Offered by the Virginia Piper Cancer
Institute:*

**Brain Tumor (with the
Neuroscience Institute)**

Call 612-863-3732.

Breast Cancer

**Coping With Change
(esophageal, gastric, head
and neck cancer support group)**

I Can Cope

Look Good, Feel Better

**Program for Women Newly
Diagnosed With Breast
Cancer (structured series
of four sessions)**

HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

Aphasia Support Group

**Stress Reduction Biofeedback
Program**

HEART AND LUNG

Heart Failure Support Group

Heart Transplant Support Group

For people on the heart transplant
waiting list and their families.

**Women's-Only
Cardiac Support Group**

Call 612-863-3816.

PENNY GEORGE INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND HEALING

*Please call 612-863-3333 to register
for events and classes at the Penny
George Institute for Health and Healing.*

Acupuncture

Drum Circle

Herbal Therapies

**Mindfulness-Based Stress
Reduction**

**Nutritional Support for
Specific Health Concerns**

Physician Consultation

Yoga

NEUROSCIENCE

Offered by the Neuroscience Institute:

**Brain Tumor (with Virginia
Piper Cancer Institute)**

Call 612-863-3732.

Parkinson's Disease

Call 612-863-5850.

PREGNANCY, BIRTH AND PARENTING

All About Babies

Birth and Parenting Preparation

Breastfeeding Preparation

Expecting Multiples

Infant and Child CPR

Infant Massage

New Brother/New Sister

**Small Talk: Communicating
With Your Baby**

Refresher Birth and

Parenting Preparation

Vaginal Birth After Cesarean

STROKE

*Offered by Sister Kenny® Rehabilitation
Institute:*

Stroke Support Group

For stroke survivors and family
members. Call 612-863-4996.



If you do not find the
program or class you're
looking for in this listing,
call Allina Class Registration
at 612-262-3333 for infor-
mation about offerings at
other Allina hospitals or visit
www.allina.com/classes.



ESTERN HOSPITAL

Registration at 612-262-3333.

VISION

Offered by the Phillips Eye Institute:

Refractive Surgery: Is It for You?

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Regular volunteer orientation takes place every second Wednesday. For more information, please call Volunteer Services at 612-863-4281.

WEIGHT-LOSS SURGERY

Please call 612-863-7501 for information about weight-loss surgery support groups. All groups welcome people who have had or are considering weight-loss surgery at Abbott Northwestern or at other hospitals. Support groups include an educational presentation and are facilitated by a professional.

LAP-BAND® Support Group

For individuals who have had or are considering LAP-BAND surgery. Meets monthly.

Renewal and Renewal Halves Support Groups

For individuals who have had or are considering Roux-en-Y gastric bypass surgery. Renewal Halves is for partners or family members of Roux-en-Y patients. Both groups meet monthly.

Therapeutic Support Group

For individuals who have had weight-loss surgery and need the guidance of a licensed psychologist to assist in regaining focus and eliminating barriers to a successful weight-loss journey. Meets monthly. Fee is \$15 per session.



COMING EVENT

Women's-Only Cardiac Support Group

Date: Winter session—Monday evenings, Jan. 5 through Feb. 16

Time: 6:30-8 p.m.

Location: Minneapolis Heart Institute, 920 E. 28th St., Minneapolis

If you are a woman living with heart disease, you are invited to join other women to discuss your experiences, strategies for heart-healthy living and solutions to the challenges you face.

The Women's-Only Cardiac Support Group at the Minneapolis Heart Institute is a weekly program that is designed especially for women to provide support, encouragement, camaraderie and helpful information about improving lifestyle habits and heart health. Guest speakers and featured topics will help you learn about ways to better your heart health.

All women with heart disease are welcome to attend any or all of the sessions. There is no cost to participate, and complimentary parking is provided. For more information or to register, please call 612-863-3816 to ensure adequate seating, materials and refreshments.

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Surgery

—Continued from front page

work to improve the treatment they offer.

ROBOTIC SURGERY

That affected Meyer's care in important ways. For instance, he was treated with chemotherapy before surgery, as recent clinical studies recommended. He also became one of the first patients in the state to have a robot-assisted esophagectomy. At Abbott Northwestern, surgeons are using the da Vinci® robot-assisted

"It's important to have a range of options for the patients we treat, and robotic surgery is one of those options."
 —Daniel Dunn, MD

surgical system for esophageal, prostate, gynecologic and urologic procedures.

The da Vinci offers close-up real-time images, smaller instruments and the ability to move the instruments in very tight areas. That means fewer and smaller incisions, which can reduce pain and trauma to surrounding tissues.

Removing the esophagus is a difficult procedure that involves moving the stomach to form a new esophagus. A minimally invasive technique has been developed in recent years that uses

small incisions in the chest as well as the abdomen.

Using the da Vinci allows surgeons to remove the esophagus from the abdomen without any incisions in the chest. Lung complications, painful chest incisions and chest tubes are thus avoided.

"It makes a big difference with the patient's pain and discomfort," says Dunn. Although not every patient is a candidate for a robot-assisted

procedure, it is a valuable addition to cancer surgery. "It's important to have a range of options for the patients we treat, and robotic surgery is one of those options," he says.

As Meyer recovered from surgery, the staff at the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute helped him modify his diet and prepare for another round of chemotherapy. Meyer also attended a support group for survivors of esophageal cancer. "I have never been a support group person, but it really helped me, and I continue to go when I can," he says.

A NEW PASSION

Now Meyer has a new passion in his already busy life. He plays an active role in helping other esophageal cancer patients at the

HOW TO REACH US

Directions Line 612-863-5550
 Emergency Department 612-863-4233
 General Information . . . 612-863-4000
 Allina Class Registration 612-262-3333
 Patient Information . . . 612-863-4111
For hospital information and services, visit www.abbottnorthwestern.com.

Virginia Piper Cancer Institute cope with a difficult diagnosis.

Meyer returns to his oncologist for follow-up visits every four months. He has remained cancer-free. Because there was no evidence that the cancer had spread beyond the esophagus, doctors are hopeful about his prognosis. "It looks like they were able to catch it early—I'm just very lucky," he says. ♦

A rising threat

Although still considered uncommon, esophageal cancer incidence has increased dramatically. Between 1975 and 2001, the number of cases of esophageal adenocarcinoma rose faster than for any other major cancer type in the United States, according to the National Cancer Institute.

For more information about esophageal cancer treatment at the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute, please visit www.abbottnorthwestern.com/VPCI or call 612-863-4648.

