

# Northfield

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## HOSPITAL

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### Nurses make all the difference at birth center

**F**IRST TOUCH Birth Center at the new Northfield Hospital is a beautiful facility. Its decor is warm and inviting. It has spacious birthing suites with whirlpools, family-friendly postpartum rooms, sophisticated security—all of the amenities. But the mothers who have given birth there will tell you it is the nurses who still make the difference.

“We hear it time and time again,” says Annette Sheldon, clinical coordinator of First Touch



Mary Ulschmid, a longtime nurse at First Touch Birth Center, admires a new arrival.

Birth Center. “Patients think the facility is fabulous, but in their surveys they point to the quality of nursing care as the critical factor in a successful experience at First Touch.”

Here are some of the new mothers’ comments:

“The staff up in the First Touch Birth Center is absolutely amazing.”

“I was blown away by the nurses—so nice, so knowledgeable, so helpful.”

“The treatment [I] received from the nurses was wonderful.”

Comments like these echo the theme that Ken Bank, hospital president and CEO, has stressed throughout the development of the new campus and hospital—the facility is there to support the work of the staff.

“This wonderful new facility is not an end in itself,” he says. “It is here to support the high level of care that is a hallmark of Northfield Hospital.”

Besides the home-like environment and family-friendly policies, the birth center offers a wide range of services. There are childbirth classes and individualized birth plans that help the staff understand your specific choices for labor and delivery. There are family physicians on staff as well as OB/GYN specialists. Surgical services are immediately adjacent to the birth center in case of emergency. First Touch also offers a labor epidural service, lactation counseling, newborn hearing screening and postpartum education and support.

This all has been developed to support and enhance the life-changing event of childbirth. But it is the warmth of the nurses and the personalized care they offer that helps most.

To learn more about First Touch Birth Center or childbirth classes, call 507-646-1205. ♦



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# Parenting requires continuous learning



By Scott Richardson, Member of the Healthy Community Initiative Board of Directors

**R**AISING children is one of the best ways to continue learning. Creating learning opportunities for parents is one of the Northfield Area Parent Communication Network's (PCN) key objectives. These opportunities can help parents become mindful about their parenting approach and adjust to the challenges of each child-development stage.

The Family Education Center is a great place for parents to start. It lays the foundation for effective parenting in many ways. It offers important information and connects parents with others who are at the same stage of life. But it is available only to parents of children 5 and younger. We need community resources such as the PCN, parent-teacher organizations, Project SIGHT, Extension and

church groups to help parents with children in elementary, middle and high schools.

Earlier this fall, the PCN partnered with the Northfield Healthy Community Initiative and College City Beverage to create and promote a "social norms" marketing campaign aimed at parents. The goal was to identify and publicize best parenting practices to support parents in their efforts at home. And because parents are often too busy to attend a class or seminar, we made the entire community a classroom. You've probably seen evidence of the campaign in flyers, newsletters and newspapers or heard about it on the radio.

To prepare the campaign, we asked many parents to relate information that they thought other parents would benefit from hearing. This information became a collection of

best practices. Among them:

- Kids have opportunities to have many friends, but only one set of parents. Parents should stay in the parent mode and not try to be their children's best friends.
- Parenting is not a part-time job. The notion that quality time can make up for quantity is highly overrated.
- Parents should always know where their children are and whom they are with, and they should communicate with the parents of their children's friends.
- Parents of older children should

be aware of tips to help them set reasonable driving limits and prepare their children to leave for college.

■ Communication is very important. Parents should talk to their children and be a source of good information and advice about drug use and sexual activity.

**TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BEST PARENTING PRACTICES, LOOK FOR THE "PEARL" IN YOUR SCHOOL. HE OR SHE HAS RESOURCES TO HELP YOU.**

To learn more about the best parenting practices, look for the PEARL in your school. Call 507-664-3524 for assistance. PEARLS are parents who have agreed to be a resource for other parents at their children's grade level. They maintain a resource cart with lots of good reading materials, videos and tapes. They will work to get the answers you seek.

We know parents are the most effective teachers children have. We also know that there are proven parenting styles and techniques that work. Let's put them to work in service to our children. ♦

# Fixed MRI machine increases patient access to services

**N**ORTHFIELD Hospital has added a fixed MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) machine to its collection of diagnostic tools. This means patients will have greater access to a service that has become a staple in the world of diagnostic imaging.

MRI is a fast, noninvasive procedure that uses radio waves and a strong magnetic field to provide detailed pictures of internal organs and tissues. It has proved to be a valuable tool in diagnosis of a broad range of conditions, including cancer, vascular disease, stroke, and joint and musculoskeletal disorders.

Northfield Hospital has provided MRI services for many years, but until last month it was a mobile service that was available only one day a week. The fixed MRI is available Monday through Friday.

## A TYPICAL EXAM

A typical MRI exam consists of two to six imaging sequences, each lasting two to 15 minutes. Each sequence shows a cross section of the body in one of several planes.

Depending on how many images are needed, the exam generally takes from 15 to 45 minutes.

LuAnn Morrison, director of Diagnostic Services at Northfield Hospital, says the new MRI is state-of-the-art. Its magnet, a critical component of this technology, is as strong as any routinely used in the health care field, she says.

## INVESTING IN TECHNOLOGY

This acquisition is another example of Northfield Hospital's continuing investment in advanced technology to provide doctors with increasingly sophisticated diagnostic tools. The new MRI will round out a Medical Imaging department that features a multi-slice computerized tomography (CT) scanner, mammography, ultrasound and a digital fluoroscope. A nuclear spect camera, which maps energy emitted from a radioactive substance given to the patient, is available two

days a week through a mobile service. Space has been dedicated in the new hospital for a fixed nuclear camera. Plans are to add one once demand justifies it. "We're now able to provide almost all of the community's imaging needs right here with our advanced technology," Morrison says.

**PATIENTS NOW HAVE GREATER ACCESS TO MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING SERVICES.**

## EXAMS MORE PRECISE, MORE COMFORTABLE

Procedures today are more comfortable for the patient, and the information generated is much more precise. For instance, the multi-slice CT scanner provides thinner images with finer detail. When they are reconstructed in three dimensions by computer programs, more subtle variances in tissue are revealed. The new technology allows the images to be rotated to provide better viewing from different angles.

Today's information is also more



Above: Lauri Facile, a radiology technician at Northfield Hospital, brings the captured images to the computer screen for analysis.

Below: Lauri Facile prepares a patient for an MRI.



portable than ever before. Information captured digitally can be transferred over T1 telephone lines and analyzed by physicians in other locations, when necessary.

Medical Imaging at Northfield Hospital is not yet a filmless department, but with the move to the new facility, it is positioned to become completely digital. ❖

## CANCER PREVENTION

# CONTROLLING what you can

**HOW EATING BETTER  
AND EXERCISING  
CAN REDUCE YOUR RISK  
OF MANY CANCERS**



IF YOU'RE AN OPTIMIST, you probably imagine a cancer-free future. If you're a pessimist, you might worry about your chances. If you're a realist, maybe you look at your odds and hope for the best.

But when it comes to preventing cancer, you can do more than imagine, worry or hope.

You do have some control.

Of course, if you smoke, the very best thing you could do is quit. But besides quitting smoking, the most effective way you can prevent cancer is by improving your diet and becoming more physically active.

"When we say that to people, they can't get over it," says Colleen Doyle, director of nutrition and physical activity for the American Cancer Society (ACS). "They think so much of cancer is unavoidable, or that it's genetics."

In reality, only about one-third of cancers are due to heredity or other uncontrollable factors, according to the ACS. Another third are the result of smoking, and diet and exercise account for the rest.

### CANCER AND DIET

Population studies have shown that people whose diets are high in fruits and vegetables, low in animal fat and meat, and contain fewer

calories have a reduced risk of cancer, says the ACS.

Diets high in fruits and vegetables, for example, are associated with a lower risk of oral, esophageal, stomach and colon cancers. Exactly why they help isn't known, says the ACS, but these foods are chock-full of vitamins, minerals, fiber and a number of phytochemicals, which are potent disease-fighting substances.

A high-fat diet has been linked to cancers of the colon, prostate, rectum and endometrium (uterine lining). Meat—more specifically, red meat—also is associated with colon and prostate cancers.

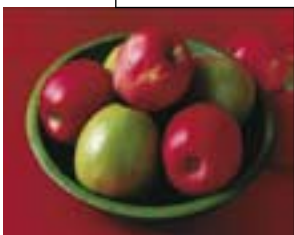
### CANCER AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Exercise has been clearly shown to help prevent a number of diseases, such as heart disease and osteoporosis.

Lesser known is its effect on cancer, but the ACS says the evidence is that physical activity can reduce the risk for some cancers, including breast and colon cancers.

According to the ACS, physical activity may offer cancer-fighting benefits by:

- Speeding food through the intestine, lessening exposure to harmful substances.
- Decreasing exposure of breast tissue to circulating estrogen.





■ Helping you maintain a healthy weight and reducing the risk of developing diabetes, which is associated with higher risk of pancreatic and other cancers.

### REDUCE YOUR RISK

It's not healthy for anyone to live in fear of cancer. So don't waste energy on worry. Instead, invest it in adopting practices into your everyday life that can help reduce your risk.

The ACS offers the following general recommendations:

**Eat a variety of healthful foods, with an emphasis on plant sources.** Suggestions include:

- Eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily.
- Choose whole grains over processed or refined grains and sugars.
- Limit red meat and eat more fish, poultry and beans.

## Smart moves for more information

For information on cancer and cancer prevention, visit the American Cancer Society's Web site at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org). Or you can call the society at 1-800-227-2345.

■ Choose foods that help you maintain a healthy weight.

**Adopt a physically active lifestyle.** This means:

- For adults, 30 minutes or more of at least moderate activity on five or more days of the week.
- More vigorous activity for 45 minutes or more on five or more days of the week might further reduce the risk of colon and breast cancer.
- For children, 60 minutes or more of at least moderate activity on five or more days of the week.

### IMPRESSIVE BENEFITS

The benefits of these lifestyle changes go far beyond cancer prevention, of course. Your heart will certainly benefit, for example.

But even if they reduced cancer risk alone, notes Doyle, "It's a huge percentage of cancers we're talking about [preventing]—two out of every three, when you include not smoking."

If you need help to quit smoking, consult your doctor. It's also a good idea to ask about screenings; early detection is important to effective treatment, and some screenings can spot treatable precancers.

The bottom line: Every step you take to prevent cancer is a wise investment in your future health. ❖

## Delicious medicine

### SPINACH FRUIT SALAD WITH STRAWBERRY-GINGER DRESSING

- 8 cups lightly packed spinach leaves
- 1 pint strawberries, stemmed and halved
- 4 cups assorted melon chunks
- 1½ cups orange and grapefruit segments
- Strawberry-ginger dressing (recipe below)

Line 4 plates with spinach. Top with fruits, dividing equally. Serve with dressing. Makes 4 servings.

**Strawberry-ginger dressing:** In a blender or food processor, puree 1½ cups strawberries; transfer to a bowl. Mix in 2 tablespoons honey, 1½ tablespoons lime juice, 2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger and a pinch of salt. Use immediately, or cover and refrigerate up to two days. Makes about 1 cup.

Adapted from a recipe from the American Dietetic Association





# On your side

**HOW MAMMOGRAMS SAVE LIVES—AND WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU**

**S**AY THE WORDS “breast cancer,” and many women are understandably frightened. But there is some reassuring news to report about this cancer.

After years of not budging, the death rate from breast cancer is steadily falling, with mortality dropping by 2 percent every year since 1991. According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), a major reason for this decline is the early detection of breast cancer made possible by regular mammograms.

These safe, low-dose x-rays can detect breast tumors long before they are big enough to actually be felt. “And the smaller a tumor is when it’s found, the more apt it is to respond to treatment and

the better a woman’s chances are of surviving the disease,” says Debbie Saslow, Ph.D., ACS director of breast and gynecologic cancer.

In short, though mammography has been the subject of debate from time to time, most major medical groups now agree on this bottom line: Mammograms save lives. In fact, according to U.S. health officials, if all the women in this country for whom mammography is recommended had the screening, the breast cancer death rate could drop by up to 25 percent over 10 years.

Moreover, not only do mammograms help women survive a

potentially deadly disease, they also help increase a woman’s treatment options. Early detection allows many women to avoid a mastectomy and opt instead for breast-sparing surgery.

## YOUR TIMETABLE

All this is why the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services advises that women 40 or older have mammograms every one to two years.

If you have a family history of the disease or have already been diagnosed with breast cancer or breast problems, you may need more frequent or earlier screening. Your doctor can suggest a screening schedule that best protects you.

When it’s time to schedule a mammogram appointment, consider these pointers:

- If you still have periods, schedule the appointment one week after yours, when your breasts are less tender. You’ll likely have two images taken of each breast, and you may feel some momentary discom-

fort (like squeezing or pinching).

- It’s best to avoid deodorant, perfume or lotion under your arms on the day of your appointment; they may create shadows on

mammograms.

- While mammograms are currently the best tool available to detect early breast cancer, they may miss some cancers. So let your doctor know right away if you notice any unusual changes in your breast, such as a lump, skin puckering or nipple discharge.

In addition, your doctor can perform breast exams as part of your regular health care. ❖

**BE SURE TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT MAMMOGRAPHY.**

# Fighting the flu

A SIMPLE SHOT GOES A LONG WAY TO PROTECT YOU

**T**HE FLU CAN PACK a powerful punch. But a simple preventive shot can help you avoid this sometimes dangerous illness.

The flu, or influenza, can be particularly serious in older adults or people with some health conditions. Approximately 36,000 people die from influenza-related complications each year in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Not to be confused with the “stomach flu,” influenza is a respiratory infection. Symptoms come on suddenly, including coughing, fever, sore throat, headache and fatigue.

**Those most at risk.** The CDC recommends an annual flu shot for high-risk groups that include:

- Everyone older than 50.
- People with chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, anemia, asthma, or heart, lung and kidney diseases.
- Residents of long-term care facilities.
- Anyone with a weakened immune system, such as a person with AIDS or cancer.
- Women who are more than three months pregnant in flu season, generally November through March.
- Health care workers and family members in close contact with people at risk for flu.

Along with the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians, the

CDC encourages parents to have children who are 6 to 23 months old vaccinated for the flu because they are at increased risk of flu-related hospitalization.

**Prevention is for everyone.** Even if you don’t fall into one of these groups, it doesn’t mean that you need to suffer the misery of the flu.

The CDC encourages

anyone who wants to avoid the flu to get an annual shot. The best time to get a flu shot is in October or November. But vaccination in December or even later can still be beneficial.

No vaccine is 100 percent effective against flu. But a yearly shot does protect most people, and the most common side effect is mild—

a sore arm. If you do catch the flu after getting a shot, you are likely to be far less sick, the CDC says.

According to the CDC, if you are allergic to eggs, are sick with a high fever or have had a severe reaction to the shot in the past, you should talk with a doctor before getting a flu shot. ❖

FOR LOCAL FLU SHOT INFORMATION, VISIT [WWW.CO.RICE.MN.US](http://WWW.CO.RICE.MN.US).



## Achoo! Is it a cold or the flu?

**You feel lousy. But is it a cold or the flu?**

Colds typically only last a few days and may cause sinus problems and earaches. The flu can last longer and lead to more serious conditions such as bronchitis and pneumonia.

A stuffy nose, mild cough, sore throat and sneezing are usually signs of a cold. If you have the flu, you’re likely to be very tired, have a fever, a headache and other body aches and pains, and a bad cough.

If you have the flu, usually you will start to feel better after a few days, but call your doctor if:

- Your symptoms get worse or persist.
- You feel a little better, but then develop more serious symptoms such as vomiting, high fever, shaking chills, chest pain or coughing up mucus.

# Hospital acquires orthopedic clinic

**A**N INNOVATIVE partnership between Northfield Hospital and Orthopaedic and Fracture Clinic, P.A. (OFC), will ensure that a full range of orthopedic services will continue to be available locally.

On Oct. 1, Northfield Hospital purchased the assets of the local OFC clinic, started by orthopedic surgeons Robert Shepley, MD, and Brad Wille, MD, in 1989, from OFC's parent organization. Based in Mankato, OFC, P.A., provides orthopedic services in south central Minnesota through clinics in Mankato, Faribault and Northfield.

Support staff at the OFC clinic in Northfield are now employed by Northfield Hospital. The physicians and the physician assistants are being provided by contract through OFC, P.A.



**Robert Shepley, MD**



**Brad Wille, MD**

### A BENEFIT TO LOCAL RESIDENTS

Ken Bank, president and CEO of Northfield Hospital, says this new arrangement will benefit local residents by:

- Ensuring that Northfield continues to have quality orthopedic surgeons practicing within the community.
- Creating an environment to

promote continued growth of orthopedic services.

■ Improving the quality and scope of physical therapy and medical imaging services provided within the community, thereby reducing the need for patients to travel to the Twin Cities for care.

“Fifteen years ago, Drs. Shepley and Wille brought a level of orthopedic care to Northfield that is unusual for a community this size,” Bank says. “This partnership promises to secure and expand this high level of care and service for years to come.”

The clinic is currently located at 1381 Jefferson Road in the same building that houses the hospital's CSMR.

It will move to the new Northfield Medical Center campus once clinic space is available. ❖

# Increase your diabetes awareness

**Y**OU COULD be one of the estimated 6 million Americans who has diabetes but doesn't know it.

Heighten your awareness of diabetes and heart health by attending a free presentation with diabetes

educator Sandra Greenwood, RN, MS, CDE, on Thursday, Nov. 6, 7 p.m., at Northfield Hospital.

Follow up by scheduling an appointment for the annual Diabetes Screening the morning of Thursday, Nov. 20. For \$20 you

can have a fasting blood test done in the lab and get your blood pressure, height and weight checked. Contact Nancy at 507-646-1035 or moen@northfieldhospital.org to get details or schedule an appointment by Nov. 13. ❖

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