

# ABBOTT NORTHWESTERN

HOSPITAL

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**Karen Loewen uses the Lokomat® robot-assisted treadmill as physical therapist Keri Esser monitors her progress.**

“You ask yourself, ‘Why me?’” Loewen says. “There are always people who have even worse problems, but you still ask yourself that.”

Soon after surgery, Loewen was transferred to Sister Kenny® Rehabilitation Institute at Abbott Northwestern Hospital to begin six weeks of inpatient rehabilitation. Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute offers a combination of highly skilled rehabilitation specialists, the latest in rehabilitation technology, and integrative therapies provided by the Institute for Health and Healing.

## ROBOTIC LEGS

While Loewen participated in many therapies to promote strength, endurance and motor control, one of the most valuable therapies involved using a new rehabilitation technology called Lokomat®.

Lokomat is a robot-assisted treadmill that supports a patient in an upright position while moving the legs through a normal walking pattern—even if a patient is unable to move his or her legs independently. Sensors and other technologies monitor the patient’s gait pattern; measure changes in strength, range of motion and endurance over time; and allow the patient to gradually increase physical effort while ensuring safety. The Lokomat is not available anywhere else in Minnesota.

Rehabilitation specialists believe that the best way to restore walking function in patients with partial spinal cord injury, brain injury or stroke is to get the patient up and

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## Enhancing recovery

### ROBOTIC LEGS, HEALING THERAPIES OFFER HOPE

**A**FTER SURGERY to treat a life-threatening infection in her spine, Karen Loewen faced the most difficult physical and emotional challenge of her life—learning to walk again.

Not only would it require daily, intensive physical and occupational therapy, it would also mean coping with the inevitable anxiety and stress that accompany a serious health condition.



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ABBOTT NORTHWESTERN HOSPITAL

Allina Hospitals & Clinics

# HEALTH UPDATE

## ABBOTT NORTHWESTERN HOSPITAL

### Minnesota goes smoke-free Oct. 1

On Oct. 1 of this year, all bars and restaurants in the state will go smoke-free as part of the Freedom to Breathe Act, which was signed into law in May.

"This is a tremendous accomplishment for the state of Minnesota," says Penny Wheeler, MD, Allina chief clinical officer. "The health benefits from reducing people's exposure to secondhand smoke can be significant, and I'm proud of Allina's involvement in making this day a reality."

As one of the founding members of the Freedom to Breathe Coalition, Allina's involvement in this issue has deep roots. In fact, passing smoke-free legislation has been a public policy priority for Allina going back several years.

"My thanks go out to all who've worked so hard to get us here," says Allina President and CEO Dick Pettingill. ❖



### Among best in the country for heart attack treatment

Abbott Northwestern Hospital is one of the best hospitals in the country at treating heart attacks, according to new data from the federal agency in charge of promoting quality health care throughout the nation.

The U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) recently released 30-day mortality rates for heart attack patients at 4,400 hospitals in the United States. Abbott Northwestern was one of only 17 hospitals in the country to have a 30-day mortality rate that was better than the national rate of 16.4 percent.

"We're pleased with the ratings. It puts us in a special class," says Kevin Graham, MD, a cardiologist and president of the Minneapolis Heart Institute at Abbott Northwestern Hospital. "This is a reflection of how hard the entire hospital staff works to improve survival rates for this life-threatening disease and deliver exceptional care to patients."

Each year, hundreds of heart attack patients are treated at Abbott Northwestern Hospital. According to the CMS data, those patients have a demonstrably lower 30-day mortality rate than those treated at more than 99 percent of the country's hospitals. The rates, which are available at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov), were calculated using sophisticated risk-adjustment that takes into account previous health problems to "level the playing field" among hospitals. They are listed in three categories: "No different than the U.S. National Rate," "Better than the U.S. National Rate" and "Worse than the U.S. National Rate."

Abbott Northwestern is the only hospital in Minnesota to rate in the "Better than the U.S. National Rate" category. ❖

### Abbott Northwestern: Award-winning care

Abbott Northwestern Hospital is cited as one of the nation's best hospitals in the 18th annual edition of *U.S. News & World Report*.

Each year the publication identifies hospitals that excel at treating serious illnesses using complex procedures and the latest technology.

Only 173 of the 5,462 facilities evaluated met the standards for excellence. Abbott Northwestern was ranked:

- No. 28 in heart and heart surgery
- No. 22 in neurology and neurosurgery
- No. 27 in orthopedics
- No. 43 in cancer
- No. 23 in endocrinology
- No. 43 in geriatrics
- No. 48 in gynecology
- No. 33 in digestive disorders. ❖



# Preparing for surgery

## STEPS TO HELP EASE THE WAY

**W**HEN YOU'RE going to have surgery, it's understandable to be a little nervous. Even outpatient surgery, which doesn't require a hospital stay, can cause some anxiety.

But there are some steps you can take to ease your worries. Understanding the process and planning ahead a bit can help pave the way for a smoother time and a faster recovery.

For starters, be sure to ask your doctor about anything you don't understand. Your doctor will want you to have your questions answered before your surgery.

## TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Giving yourself a little extra care now can help prepare your body to handle surgery. Get plenty of rest and eat a well-balanced diet. Your doctor may suggest a daily multivitamin as well.

Some additional steps from leading health authorities:

- If you are a smoker, you can do yourself a favor by quitting—or at least cutting back—before surgery. Smoking delays healing.
- Ask your doctor if you should stop taking aspirin or other medications before surgery. Tell your doctor about any prescription and over-the-counter medicines or dietary supplements you use.

Any special instructions? Ask your doctor before your surgery date.

## DEALING WITH DETAILS

Before your surgery, you'll be given any special instructions—they will likely include not eating or drinking anything after the previous midnight.

Other general advice:

- Ask your doctor about home health care if your recovery may be extensive.
- Consider having someone help with household tasks while you recover.
- Arrange for transportation to and from the hospital.
- Leave any valuables at home.

## GETTING BETTER

To help your recovery, a nurse or other medical professional will help you start walking as soon as possible after surgery—walking aids healing. Pain medication may help you feel more comfortable.

Once you are home, you can help speed your recovery by following

your discharge instructions, which give advice about your diet, activities and symptoms to watch for. And as always, don't hesitate to call your doctor if you have questions. ♦

## Same-day convenience

The Ambulatory Surgery Center at Abbott Northwestern Hospital offers same-day surgery for a wide variety of surgical needs, including general surgery, plastic surgery, urology, gynecology, otolaryngology and podiatry. All surgeons and anesthesiologists are board-certified.

Patients appreciate the calm atmosphere and the convenient, yet exceptional, care that the center provides. It also offers the option to admit patients for follow-up care and provides easy access to the wealth of medical and technological resources at Abbott Northwestern Hospital, if needed.

For more information, call 612-863-3006.

## DIABETES

# Keeping feet happy

**F**OR THOSE with diabetes, staying healthy means making foot care a pressing priority.

Nerve damage and low blood flow due to diabetes can make you more prone to foot problems and keep you from feeling injuries to your feet. And even the smallest sore or injury can become a serious infection.

A doctor should check your feet regularly. You can help protect them, too.

**Take a close look.** Inspect feet and toes daily for nail problems, puncture wounds, pressure spots, redness, bruises, blisters, ulcers and cuts. If you find the slightest injury, don't try to treat it yourself. See a doctor right away.

**Clean, polish and trim.** Wash—but don't soak—feet daily with soap and warm water. Pat feet dry

with a towel and carefully dry between your toes. Use lotion to keep skin soft and moist—but don't put lotion between your toes.

**Trim nails straight across.** Smooth them with a nail file or emery board (don't use sharp instruments).

**Do no harm.** Avoid walking around barefoot. Don't use heating pads, antiseptic solutions or over-the-counter foot products without your doctor's permission.

**Be picky about shoes—and socks, too.** Choose low-heeled shoes with plenty of room for your toes. Shoes made from leather allow feet to “breathe.” Other materials may not. Wear well-padded socks that are one-half inch longer than your longest toe. Avoid stretch socks, nylon socks and socks with elastic at the top.

Caring for your feet can help protect them from infection.

**Treat feet with respect.** Keep your feet dry. Don't wear the same pair of shoes two days in a row, and wear clean socks every day.

Check inside your shoes for things like gravel or torn linings, which can cause sores. Don't lace shoes too tightly or too loosely. ❖

Sources: American Academy of Family Physicians; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Prevent an asthma emergency

**A**STHMA sends thousands of Americans to hospital emergency departments every day.

You may be at risk if you have these signs of poorly controlled asthma:

- wheezing or coughing that wakes you at night
- using a quick-relief inhaler more than twice a week
- missing school or work, or not being able to take part in other everyday activities
- feelings of chest tightness and fatigue.

**Five steps to breathing better.** To avoid an emergency, follow these

five steps to better asthma control:

- 1 Identify and minimize contact with those things that tend to trigger your asthma, such as smoke, cold air and pet dander.
- 2 Take medicines as prescribed. If you take more than one medicine, understand what each medicine does and why it helps.
- 3 Use a peak-flow meter. A meter can detect narrowing in your airways hours—or even days—before you feel symptoms.
- 4 Take medicine at the earliest sign that your asthma is worsening.
- 5 Talk to your doctor about what to do in an emergency. ❖

Source: Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America



# Numbers count

KNOW WHERE YOU STAND WHEN IT COMES TO HEART HEALTH

**T**HE NUMBERS that describe your cholesterol, blood pressure and blood glucose levels are key parts in an important equation—one that can add up to a healthier heart.

Knowing your numbers and how to control these important factors in heart health can help you avoid problems down the road, according to the American Heart Association (AHA).

## CHOLESTEROL LEVELS

Start with cholesterol. You'll want to pay attention to these three key numbers (based on blood tests):

- high-density lipoprotein (HDL), the “good” cholesterol
- low-density lipoprotein (LDL), the “bad” cholesterol
- triglycerides, a form of fat.

For HDL, think high. Men should aim for an HDL of 40 mg/dL or higher, while the goal for women is 50 mg/dL or higher, according to the AHA. When numbers drop below these levels, heart trouble is more likely.

For LDL, think low. LDL levels should be kept as low as possible—less than 100 mg/dL is optimal for both men and women.

Normal triglyceride levels are less than 150 mg/dL.

## BLOOD PRESSURE

Pressure created by your beating heart circulates blood through your body. A normal blood pressure reading is less than 120/80 mm Hg.

But if your blood vessels become

inflexible or too narrow, blood pressure can get too high, making your heart work harder and promoting damage to blood vessels. High blood pressure increases chances of heart attack, stroke, kidney failure and other problems.

## BLOOD GLUCOSE

If your body doesn't make enough insulin or doesn't properly use the insulin it makes, glucose (or sugar) that's supposed to go to the body's cells for energy instead builds up in the blood.

When blood sugar levels get too high—a fasting blood glucose of 126 mg/dL or more—you have diabetes. Untreated diabetes can lead to cardiovascular disease, kidney disease, blindness and other problems.

## TAKING CONTROL

Diet and exercise are two great ways to keep your cholesterol,

blood pressure and blood sugar levels healthy.

Specifically, the AHA recommends:

- eating a diet rich in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, fish and lean meats and low in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, and added salt and sugar
- getting at least 30 minutes of physical activity on most days
- maintaining a healthy weight; losing weight if needed
- not smoking.

If these lifestyle measures aren't enough, your doctor may also prescribe medication. ❖

Register today for  
Surviving and  
Thriving With Heart  
Disease. See Page 7.



## Sizable clues to heart health

If you're curious about the health of your heart, you might check out the size of your waist.

The American Heart Association says carrying too much fat around your middle puts you at greater risk for high blood pressure, unhealthy cholesterol levels and high blood glucose.

Men with a waist measurement of 40 inches or more are at highest risk, as are women with waist measurements of 35 inches or more.

To get an accurate reading, measure your middle at your natural waistline, just above your navel.

Another way to estimate the amount of fat in your body involves BMI, or body mass index, the relationship between your height and weight.

A BMI of 25 or more is considered overweight; 30 or more is obese.

**What's your BMI?**  
To determine your BMI, visit [www.allina.com](http://www.allina.com). Under *Be Healthy*, select *Health Calculators*.





# ABBOTT NORTHWESTERN

To register or for more information, call Medformation® at 612-262-3333



## HEALTH CLASSES, COMING EVENTS

[www.abbottnorthwestern.com](http://www.abbottnorthwestern.com)  
or call 612-262-3333.

### CANCER

*Support groups offered by the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute:*

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

**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)

### DIABETES

**Diabetes Education**

One-to-one and group education for people with all forms of diabetes.

### 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.

### INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND HEALING

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

**Acupuncture**

**Drum Circle**

**Herbal Therapies**

**Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction**

**Nutritional Support for Specific Health Concerns**

**Physician Consultation**

**Yoga**

### NEUROSCIENCE

*Support groups offered by the Minneapolis Neuroscience Institute:*

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

**Parkinson's Disease**

### 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**



If you do not find the program or class you're looking for in this listing, call Medformation® at 612-262-3333 for information about offerings at other Allina hospitals, or visit [www.allina.com](http://www.allina.com).

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or visit [www.allina.com](http://www.allina.com).

## STROKE

### Stroke Support Group

For stroke survivors and family members at Sister Kenny® Rehabilitation Institute. Call 612-863-4996 for information.

## 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.

### LAP-BAND® Support Group

Offers information, support and socializing. Meets the second and last Monday of the month, 6-7:30 p.m.

### Duodenal Switch Support Group

Focuses on lifestyle changes, the decision process and challenges that are unique to this procedure. Meets the first and third Tuesday of the month, 6-7:30 p.m.

### Transitions

For individuals who have had or are considering gastric bypass surgery. Meets the first and third Monday of the month, 1-2:30 p.m.

### Renewal Support Group

For individuals who have had or are considering gastric bypass surgery. Meets Tuesdays, 6-7:30 p.m. Call 612-338-1100 for information.



## COMING EVENT

### Two Authors, Two Journeys: Surviving and Thriving With Heart Disease

**Date:** Wednesday, Sept. 19, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Registration and book signing begin at 5:45 p.m.

**Location:** Hotel Sofitel, Bloomington, Minn.

**Cost:** \$15

**Register:** Call Medformation® at 612-262-3333

The Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation invites you to learn how to prevent and manage heart disease through the personal experiences of noted authors and heart attack survivors Kathy Kastan and Joe Piscatella.

Kastan is president of WomenHeart: The National Coalition for Women With Heart Disease and is the author of *From the Heart: A Woman's Guide to Living Well With Heart Disease*. She will share her journey to recovering emotionally and physically to create a happy, healthy life.

Piscatella has written six books on nutrition and self-care, including *Take a Load Off Your Heart*, and is a frequent guest on several television news programs. He is widely respected as a cutting-edge expert on the relationship of stress and other lifestyle habits in achieving personal health.

Participants will come away with the tools and motivation to manage their stress and their lives for better health and balance.

For more information, call 612-863-3979, e-mail [cdasson@mhif.org](mailto:cdasson@mhif.org) or visit [www.mplsheartfoundation.org](http://www.mplsheartfoundation.org).

*The Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation provides scholarship funds for individuals who are unable to participate due to limited resources. To confidentially request support, please phone 621-863-3839.*



**Karen Loewen**

## Enhancing recovery

—Continued from Page 1

walking as early as possible in their rehabilitation.

“It is thought that this type of therapy facilitates the reflexes that help the body remember how to walk again,” says Keri Esser, one of Loewen’s physical therapists.

Lokomat also helps patients build strength and endurance, which are often weakened during a long hospital stay.

“It makes you feel like you are really walking,” Loewen says. “I hated to get off of it.” Loewen soon progressed to using a walker. “I also

feel like it helped prepare me for other therapies, like learning to go up and down steps.”

### HEALING THERAPIES

In addition to the advanced technology of Lokomat, Loewen benefited from the healing therapies offered by the Institute of Health and Healing, including acupuncture, therapeutic massage, healing touch

and aromatherapy.

“It was very soothing at a time when I was under so much stress,” Loewen says.

After many demanding hours of therapy every day, she found that massage and aromatherapy helped her relax and get a good night’s rest.

“Helping patients get to a place of deep relaxation is an important part of what we can offer,” says Cynthia Miller, a licensed acupuncturist and nurse with the Institute for Health and Healing. “That can be hard to do in the hospital where there are so many interruptions.”

Healing therapies can also help patients manage pain and stress.

“Coping with an injury or illness that results in a disability can be very difficult,” Miller says.

In addition to helping patients while they are in the hospital, practitioners teach patients guided imagery and other relaxation techniques that they can practice on their own.

“Many of these techniques are really helpful in the healing process,” Miller says.

Loewen is proud of the progress she has made so far and credits the staff at Sister Kenny Rehabilitation Institute. “They are so good at what they do. They have helped me tremendously,” she says.



For information about healing therapies and the Institute for Health and Healing, call 612-863-3333 or visit [www.abbottnorthwestern.com](http://www.abbottnorthwestern.com) and go to *Services & Programs*, then *Institute for Health & Healing*. To learn more about Lokomat, visit [www.sisterkennyinstitute.com](http://www.sisterkennyinstitute.com). Go to *Services & Programs*, then *Lokomat* under *Specialty Services and Clinics*. ♦

### HOW TO REACH US

Directions Line . . . . . 612-863-5550

Emergency Department . 612-863-4233

General Information . . . 612-863-4000

Medformation® . . . . . 612-262-3333

Patient Information . . . 612-863-4111

For hospital information and services, visit [www.abbottnorthwestern.com](http://www.abbottnorthwestern.com).

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