

united hospital

Volume 16, Number 2 Spring 2008
www.unitedhospital.com



A new view on life

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY HELPS RESTORE SIGHT TO LOCAL WOMAN

The best that the doctors at United Hospital hoped for was to preserve what little sight Pam Vail had remaining in her right eye. They never imagined that the procedure to remove a brain tumor on her optic nerves would not only save her sight, but would restore her vision to normal.

Vail, a 53-year-old mother of two, began having difficulty seeing out of her left eye in February 2007. A trip to the eye doctor resulted in a new contact lens prescription. But a few months later, her vision became blurry again, and she needed another stronger prescription.

—Continued on Page 8

news briefs

Watch surgery on your computer

This spring you can learn about brain surgery and uterine surgery by watching OR-Live on your computer. United Hospital will be offering two webcasts. One will feature Jerone Kennedy, MD, the neurosurgery medical director at United Hospital, operating on a patient with a brain tumor; and the other will feature Ragvald Mjanger, MD, from Metropolitan Ob/Gyn PA, performing a myomectomy (removal of fibroids in the uterus).

OR-Live is the Web's largest source of live and on-demand surgical video from leading hospitals and academic institutions.

Viewers watching the webcast live can e-mail questions about the surgery as they watch, some of which are answered in real-time by a specialist who serves as the webcast host and operating room narrator.

To view a webcast, you will need to have or download RealPlayer, a free video software program from Real Networks, Inc. Dates for the procedures at United Hospital were not available at the time of publication of this newsletter. You can learn more about webcasts and OR-Live and find the dates of the United Hospital webcasts at www.OR-Live.com. ■

Photo: Hannah Lynch, Allina photographer



The Birth Center Specialty Shop at United Hospital offers quality products for expectant mothers and families with newborn babies.

A special resource for families: The Birth Center Specialty Shop

The Birth Center Specialty Shop at United Hospital is pleased to offer quality products for expectant mothers and families with newborn babies. The shop has products for:

- pregnancy and birth
- parenting
- breastfeeding.

In addition, experts from the Breastfeeding Resource Center are

available to answer questions and to provide complimentary bra fittings and personalized pump instruction.

Gift certificates are available. Major credit cards, cash and personal checks are welcome.

For more information or shop hours, call 651-241-5504. ■

United Hospital receives national honors for their cancer program

The Commission on Cancer (CoC) of the American College of Surgeons has awarded the Cancer Care Services Program at United Hospital with a three-year approval with commendation.

For more than 80 years, the CoC has worked to reduce cancer rates through education, standard-setting and monitoring the quality of cancer care. Receiving care at a CoC-approved cancer program means patients have access to:

- comprehensive care, including state-of-the-art services and equipment
- a multispecialty team approach to bring together the best treatment options
- information about ongoing clinical trials and new treatment options
- access to cancer-related information, education and support
- a cancer registry that collects data on type and stage of cancers and treatment results and offers lifelong patient follow-up
- ongoing monitoring and improvement of care
- quality care, close to home.

"I am honored by this remarkable achievement," says David Miller, vice president, Operations, United Hospital. "This shows we are truly living up to our mission of providing the best quality care in the communities we serve." ■



Left: Leah and Gavin Pommerer

Below: Leah and Philip Pommerer say goodbye before he leaves for Iraq.

Marine watches son's birth on the Internet

When little Gavin Pommerer came into this world on Jan. 2 at United Hospital, he was greeted warmly by his mother, two sets of grandparents and his father, who was more than 7,000 miles away in Iraq.

Philip Pommerer, a corporal in the United States Marine Corps, took part in the birth of his son through videoconferencing. A webcam, speakers and the Internet kept Philip in touch with his wife, Leah, throughout the labor and the delivery.

"He was a great coach," Leah says. "We were able to hear him and talk back and forth through the whole process."

Leah researched videoconference births last summer when she knew her husband would be in Iraq. The Pommerers are stationed at Camp Pendleton in California, where Leah is a member of the Key Volunteer Network, a Marine Corps family readiness program that provides information and support for families of deployed marines. It was at a Key meeting that someone told her about videoconferencing.

After Philip left for Iraq, Leah returned to St. Paul to stay with her parents. She connected with Edward Woo, MD, an obstetrician and gynecologist.

"Dr. Woo was so supportive and excited," Leah says. "It was his first teleconferenced birth, too."

The technology

In September, Leah contacted Cindy Osborn, a leader in the United Birth Center, about videoconferencing the birth. Working closely with a technology team, Osborn assured Leah that United would "make it happen." One of the delivery rooms was permanently cabled, and Osborn and her team were trained on how to set up and use the equipment.

"We were ready and excited," Osborn says. "I walked into work that morning and was told Leah was in active labor and on her way." Osborn readied the room and had IS check that the equipment worked correctly.

In addition, the technicians worked with the ANS Network to ensure

that Philip had secure access to the hospital's network so that he could log on and watch the birth live.

The delivery

When Leah's labor pains began early on Jan. 2, she called Philip by cell phone. At 7 a.m. CST, the video-conference began.

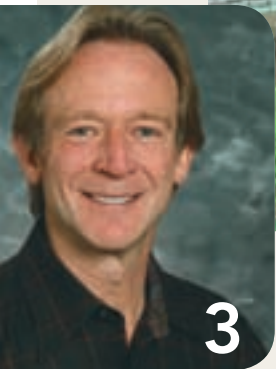
"Philip was with us from 7 a.m. until Gavin was born shortly after 10 a.m.," says Tod Erdmann, Leah's father. "He would ask the nurses to adjust the camera, and coached Leah through the labor pains." Once Gavin was born, Erdmann held the camera on his new grandson so that Philip could watch.

Philip was able to download still images from the video feed and e-mail them to friends and family back home within minutes of the birth.

"Everyone has been a dream," Leah says. "I can't thank them enough for what they did for Philip and me." Leah and Gavin are now looking forward to this spring when Philip returns home to hold his son for the first time.



For more information about the Birth Center, go to www.unitedhospital.com and click on *The Birth Center*. ■



Is it an emergency?

UNDERSTANDING HOW THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT WORKS

It's not always easy to know whether a medical situation calls for a trip to the emergency department. Is that hacking cough a crisis? Does that cut need stitches? Is that heartburn or heart problems?

1 An emergency is defined as a situation where someone could suffer significant harm or die without prompt care.

2 Architect's rendering of the new Emergency Department that will be built at United Hospital

3 Jay Westwater, MD, medical director of United Hospital's Emergency Department

And besides, even if you go to the emergency department, will you have to wait for hours to be seen? Couldn't you just wait for the doctor's office to open?

"The rule of thumb is to err on the side of caution," says Jay Westwater, MD, medical director of United Hospital's Emergency Department. "If you're not sure you have an emergency, assume you do and get help."

Many insurance plans and clinics offer a nurse line. Talking with a medical professional by phone can help you determine the seriousness of your situation.

What is an emergency?

According to the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP), it's an emergency if someone could suffer significant harm or die without prompt care.

Some warning signs are:

- problems breathing
- chest pain that lasts two minutes or more
- bleeding that is severe or cannot be stopped
- coughing up or vomiting blood
- sudden dizziness, weakness or changes in vision
- severe or persistent diarrhea or vomiting
- confusion or other changes in mental status.

If you or someone you know experiences any of these symptoms, you need to go to the emergency department. Call 911 if:

- you think the person's condition is life-threatening or might become so quickly

- moving the person requires special skills or equipment
- the person is experiencing chest pain
- the ill person is you and no one is available to drive.

Why the wait?

Even if you determine the situation is an emergency, oftentimes when you arrive at the hospital you have to wait. It might seem like a contradiction, but sometimes going to the emergency department can take longer than a visit to your doctor's office.

One reason is that there are no set appointments. That means any number of people could arrive for care at the same time.

If you're not sure you have an emergency, assume you do and get help.

To handle this, emergency departments use a system called *triage*, which sorts people by the severity of their illnesses or injuries. Those with the most serious medical conditions are seen first, while those with less severe problems may have to wait.

When you arrive at the emergency department, a nurse or other health care worker will ask about your symptoms. Your vital signs—such as blood pressure and temperature—will be checked.

If you're told to wait, rest assured that you will be seen as soon as possible. ■

Expanding emergency services

In April construction begins on expanding the Emergency Department at United Hospital. The current facility is too small for the number of patients being seen, and United needs to update the facility and capabilities to continue to meet the needs of patients and the community.

The new facility will feature:

- 27 examination rooms
- 6 psychiatric rooms that provide a safe and secure area
- 12 holding/observation rooms
- a larger garage that can hold a minimum of six ambulances
- a decontamination area
- patient care and family areas designed for greater privacy.

The Emergency Department continues to operate at full capacity during this expansion. Emergency staff is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Signs are posted throughout the hospital campus to direct you through the construction to the Emergency



Department. In addition, detailed maps are available online at www.unitedhospital.com.



COMMUNITY HEALTH EDUCATION AND SUPPORT GROUPS

united hospital

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.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers serve patients and staff and greet visitors at United.



Call 651-241-8644 or visit www.unitedhospital.com for an application form.

CANCER

The Breast Cancer Support Group*

First Tuesday of every month,
2-3:30 p.m.

United Hospital, Bentson Family
Conference Room

Call 651-241-8375 for more information.

Prostate Cancer Support Group

First Thursday of every month (no
class in September), 7-8:30 p.m.

John Nasseff Medical Center,
Miller Room

Call 651-241-8375 for more information.

Reach to Recovery*

One-on-one visiting and support program for women with breast cancer. By appointment in The Breast Center. Call 651-241-8610.

* Programs co-sponsored with the American Cancer Society.

HEALTH IMPROVEMENT

Our Health Improvement courses are offered at the Milton M. Hurwitz ExerCare Fitness Center, located at 362 Walnut St. For more information, call 651-241-8080.

BOSU Balance Trainer

Mondays and Wednesdays
(beginner classes), 9:45 a.m.

BOSU integrated balance training improves strength, stability and flexibility while enhancing coordination and balance.

Muscle Shop

Ongoing, Mondays and Wednesdays,
3:45-4:30 p.m.

Uses weights, bands and other equipment to tone all major muscle groups. Moderate intensity/no impact.

Pilates

Tuesdays, one-hour class, 4 p.m.

Please call us at 651-241-8080 or visit our Web site after May 1 for session dates.

Pilates exercises strengthen the core by developing pelvic stability and abdominal control.

Pink Pilates

Tuesdays, one-hour class, 4 p.m.

Please call us at 651-241-8080 or visit our Web site after May 1 for session dates.

Pilates exercises, specifically designed for breast cancer patients and survivors, strengthen the core by developing pelvic stability and abdominal control.

Yoga

Tuesdays, one-hour class, 5:15 p.m.

Please call us at 651-241-8080 or visit our Web site after May 1 for session dates.

Class includes instructions for yoga postures, breathing techniques, relaxation and guided imagery.

NEUROSCIENCE

Brain Tumor Support Group*

Second Monday of every month,
7-8:30 p.m.

Education and support for people whose lives have been affected by brain tumors. For more information and room location, call 651-241-8575.

ORTHOPEDICS

Total Knee and Hip Replacement Program

The three-hour program at United

Hospital is offered twice each month to help you learn about preparing for surgery and about your recovery after surgery. In class you will learn about your surgery, strengthening exercises, hospital care, pain management skills and discharge planning. Your family and friends are also invited to participate since their support will be important to you after surgery. For information and how to register for class, call 651-241-5390.

PREGNANCY, BIRTH AND PARENTING

United offers a variety of pregnancy, birth and parenting classes and support groups. Registration is required for classes, so call Medformation® at 612-262-3333 or visit us online at www.allina.com to register.

All About Babies

May 17, 18, June 7, 8, July 7, 12, 13,
Aug. 9, 10, Sept. 13, 14, 9:30 a.m.

One-session class that teaches parents, grandparents or adoptive parents how to care for a newborn.

COMING EVENTS

Camp United

Last summer's Camp United for junior volunteers was such a success that we are bringing it back.

Camp United is for youths 13 to 18. You attend one (or more) of our five two-week camps and spend those two weeks helping patients, families and friends at the hospital. It's just two weeks of your whole summer to help people, learn about health care and reap the benefits of volunteering.

Breastfeeding Preparation

May 5, 21, June 2, 18, July 7, 23, Aug. 4, 20, Sept. 8, 24, 7 p.m.

One-session class. Introduces parents to the basics of breastfeeding and provides resources for ongoing support.

Breastfeeding and Return to Work

• May 14, July 16, Sept. 10, 1:30 p.m.
• June 11, Aug. 13, 7 p.m.

One-session class for women who are planning to return to work and continue to breastfeed.

Childbirth and Parenting Preparation

• May 7, 27, 29, June 16, 18, July 8, 10, 28, 30, Aug. 19, 21, Sept. 9, 15, 30, 7 p.m.
• May 10, June 7, 21, July 5, 19, Aug. 2, 16, Sept. 13, 27, 9:30 a.m.

Prepares expectant parents for birth and newborn parenting.

Expectant Father

June 2, Aug. 4, 7 p.m.

One-session class for fathers-to-be.

Expectant Grandparents

May 20, July 29, Sept. 30, 7 p.m.

One-session class to learn about changes in prenatal care, labor and birth, and parenting.

Expecting Multiples

June 2, July 21, 7 p.m.

Six-session birth preparation class for parents expecting more than one baby.

Father and Baby

July 7, 7 p.m.

Three-session class for fathers and their newborns.

Infant and Child CPR

• May 10, June 14, July 12, Aug. 9, Sept. 13, 9:30 a.m.

• May 8, June 12, July 10, Aug. 14, Sept. 11, 7 p.m.

Learn resuscitation methods for infants and children younger than 8.

Infant Massage

May 14, June 11, July 9, Aug. 13, Sept. 10, 9:30 a.m.

Three-session class designed for parents and children from 3 weeks to 4 months old.

New Brother/New Sister

May 6, 22, June 3, 19, July 8, 24, Aug. 5, 21, Sept. 9, 25, 6:30 p.m.

One-session class to help children ages 2 to 10 understand what it's like to have a new brother or sister.

New Parent Connection

Tuesdays, 1:30-3 p.m.

Parent Education Room

Offers education and support for parents and babies up to 4 months.

Pregnancy After a Loss

First and third Monday of each month, 5-6:30 p.m.

Garden View Medical Center

Please call 651-241-6206 before first visit or for more information.

Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support Group

Second and fourth Monday of each month, 5-6:30 p.m.

For parents who have experienced miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death.

Please call 651-241-6206 before first visit or for more information.

Refresher Birth and Parenting Preparation

May 17, June 28, July 26, Aug. 23, Sept. 20, 9:30 a.m.

One-session class for those who have given birth within the past five years. Fee includes New Brother/New Sister class.

Small Talk

July 15, 6:30 p.m.

One-session class to learn sign language to communicate effectively with hearing infants and toddlers ages 9 months to 3 years.

REHABILITATION

Stroke

Second Thursday of each month, 2-3:30 p.m.

Garden View Medical Building Conference Room 1053/1054

The Sister Kenny® Rehabilitation Institute offers support groups for stroke survivors and their families.

WEIGHT LOSS

Weight-Loss Surgery Information

May 15, June 19, July 17, Aug. 21, Sept. 18, 7 p.m.

Weight-loss surgery is for people more than 100 pounds overweight. \$20 per person, pay at door; personal check or cash only. Register through Medformation® at 612-262-3333.

This summer's camp sessions are:

Session	Date	Deadline
Session 1	June 9-20	May 31
Session 2	July 7-18	May 31
Session 3	July 21-Aug. 1	June 30
Session 4	Aug. 4-15	June 30
Session 5	Aug. 18-29	June 30



To learn more about Camp United or about other volunteer opportunities, visit www.unitedhospital.com and click on the Volunteer Opportunities button on the bottom of the page. Space is limited, so apply early.

A Health Fair for Women of All Ages

Date: April 26

Time: 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Location: West Seventh Community Center, 265 Oneida St., St. Paul

The West Seventh Community Center is cosponsoring the 4th Annual Health Fair for Women of All Ages.

The event is a forum for women to celebrate with other women in their lives and community, visit with friends, meet neighbors, exchange cross-culturally, and learn and

share experiences about health and wellness. For more information, call 651-298-5493.

16th Annual Race for the Cure

Date: Mother's Day, Sunday, May 11

Time: 7:30 a.m.

Location: Mall of America

Join in the annual Susan G. Komen Race to find a cure for breast cancer. For more information or to register, visit www.racecure.org.

A new view

—Continued from Page 1

"That summer it was getting worse," Vail says. "I thought I'd scratched my eye and was being treated for dry eye. By Halloween, I knew in my gut that something was really wrong."

Vail went to a specialist who treats diseases involving the nerves of the eye. He discovered that Vail had no vision in her left eye and that only 50 percent of her vision in her right eye remained. He ordered a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan of her brain to try to see what was causing her to go blind.

"The doctor called me less than an hour and a half after the MRI and said 'You have a brain tumor on your optic nerve, and if we want to save your sight, it needs to come out. Now,'" Vail says.

Neurosurgery with intraoperative MRI

Vail met with Jerone Kennedy, MD, a neurosurgeon with United Neurosurgery Associates in St. Paul, the next week. She was diagnosed with a craniopharyngioma, a benign brain tumor that usually affects children but can be found in some adults. Because it was pressing on both of her optic



Neurosurgeons used advanced technology in United Hospital's new intraoperative MRI suite to remove a brain tumor and save Pam Vail's sight.

nerves and she was losing vision, surgery was needed quickly. She was scheduled to have the tumor removed in the new neurosurgery suites with intraoperative MRI at United Hospital.

Intraoperative means *during surgery*. In the suite, the state-of-the-art MRI device is brought to the patient on a steel-beam track. The patient doesn't move, the MRI scanner does. Surgeons are able to see immediately how much of the tumor they have removed while they are still in the operating room and can continue surgery if needed. The real-time images mean improved accuracy and precision during surgery.

"The intraoperative MRI allowed us to see more quickly and accurately that we had decompressed her optic

nerves," says Kennedy, the neurosurgery medical director for United Hospital.

Vail recovered quickly from the surgical procedures and within days her eyesight in both eyes returned to normal.

"It was a miracle, and I thank God and everyone at United. This was the best care I've ever had. Everyone on that surgical team took such good care of me, and I have very high marks for everyone there," she says.

Vail is undergoing radiation treatment to help reduce the chances of the tumor growing back. She hopes to be able to return to her job working with disabled children once she has recovered and is enjoying her new view on life. ■

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES™ is a publication of UNITED HOSPITAL, part of Allina Hospitals & Clinics. Allina®, the Allina logo and Medformation® are registered trademarks of Allina Health System. 651-241-8000

Mark Mishek
President

Michele G. Scheid
Editor

Information in HEALTHY COMMUNITIES™ comes from a wide range of medical experts. If you have any concerns or questions about specific content that may affect your health, please contact your health care provider. Models may be used in photos and illustrations. HEALTHY COMMUNITIES™ is UNITED HOSPITAL's edition of LIFE AND HEALTH. Copyright © 2008 Coffey Communications, Inc. LHN21651c



UNITED
HOSPITAL

Allina Hospitals & Clinics

333 N. Smith Ave.
St. Paul, MN 55102

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
St. Cloud, MN
Permit No. 2260