Noah Desserich
travels far...and near

Evelyn Estenson
takes a detour

OTC medicine
gets a safety check

Spring-clean
your pantry

New partners
continue great care
When Noah Desserich didn’t feel like taking part in the evening activities for Family Camp at St. Olaf College, his mom thought it was preteen moodiness.

Turns out it was his appendix.

Noah’s stomachache got worse as the night wore on. By 2:30 am, his mom Tracy was Googling appendicitis symptoms... and hospitals.

Noah’s CT scan and blood tests were processed quickly. His appendix was inflamed and his white blood cell count was 25,000. “He definitely needed surgery,” Tracy says. “We were 10 hours from home, thinking ‘Can we make it home fast enough to have surgery there? If he has surgery here, what about getting home?’”

Dr. Katya Ericson, general surgeon, removed Noah’s appendix that afternoon, and he spent one night in the hospital before the journey home. Nurses tailored Noah’s after-care instructions for travel – for example, stop every few hours and walk a bit to prevent blood clots.

And Noah’s parents got good care, too – from recliners and warm blankets to parent meals.

“We felt very supported in every aspect,” Tracy says. “It was a scary situation that ended up going as well as it possibly could have.”

“We wouldn’t have gotten the same kind of attention at a big hospital,” Tracy adds. “We joke that there’s nice and there’s Minnesota Nice – this definitely made us feel that Minnesota Nice.”

Noah, Zoe and Colin Desserich
Evelyn Estenson was getting ready for a trip when she fell ill.

She went to bed as usual after having abdominal discomfort all afternoon. In the night, it turned to nausea and vomiting. Evelyn was miserable.

Her son Rick lives close by, “but you hate to call in the middle of the night,” Evelyn says. “So I struggled through the night, and finally at four in the morning I called and he took me in to the Emergency Department.”

The ED team examined Evelyn and gave her IV medication to calm the nausea, then admitted Evelyn to the hospital where Katherine Helgen, MD, cared for her.

“I told Dr. Helgen about a trip to Saint Croix that I was scheduled to take in two days,” Evelyn recalls. “She said, ‘Normally I would wait a day to see if this calms down, but I think we’ll order a CT scan right now.’”

The scan showed a strangulated hernia with a twisted section of the intestine. Evelyn needed surgery, right away. General surgeon Chris Nielsen, MD performed a bowel resection and hernia repair that night.

At 89, Evelyn has had very few surgeries in her lifetime. “For someone who’s usually in control of things, I found it very easy to let them take control and do whatever they had to do,” Evelyn says.

She recuperated in the Medical/Surgical unit for six days. “The nursing staff was very good; they took care of my needs,” she says. And patient advocate Melissa Berthelsen “stopped in quite often to check on me, which I appreciated.”

Her hospital stay “was a good experience,” she says. “And when I no longer needed any care, it was OK to go home, and I was glad to go home.”

Evelyn’s advice for others choosing a hospital for their care? “I have no hesitation recommending Northfield Hospital. It’s here, it’s close, you don’t have to travel to get excellent care.”

That trip to Saint Croix? Evelyn rebooked it. For a seasoned traveler, what’s a little detour, after all?

“‘It’s here, it’s close, you don’t have to travel to get excellent care.’”

Northfield Hospital. It’s here, it’s close, you don’t have to travel to get excellent care.”
Manage your over-the-counter medicines safely

by Tricia Hagedorn, Pharm.D, BCOP

Over-the-counter (OTC) medication is booming.

There are more than 100,000 OTC products to relieve pain, allergies, cough and cold symptoms, stomach ache, and some infections. More than 700 OTC medications on shelves today were only available by prescription 30 years ago. When the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) switches a medicine’s status from prescription to OTC, that change gives you more options for your own care.

Using OTC medicine for self-care requires knowledge and responsibility. Here’s what you should know:

Read the Drug Facts label. Each piece of information on the label is important to your health.

Match active ingredients. Many products have multiple ingredients for a range of symptoms. Purchase the product whose “active ingredients” treat only your current symptoms. Cough, but no fever? Treat only the cough.

More is not necessarily better. Don’t take more than what’s recommended on the package. Follow the age and weight dosing on the label. (Children are not just small adults – don’t dose them that way.) Don’t estimate the dose. Use a dosing cup or dosing spoon made specifically for medication, not a kitchen spoon.

Beware of interactions and side effects. Drug interactions can occur between prescription and OTC medications that make medicines less effective or create unwanted side effects. OTC medications can also affect health conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, or kidney disease. Be sure to ask your pharmacist or doctor about which OTC medicines are safe for you to take.

Store and dispose medicines safely. Close all child-resistant packaging completely between uses, and store medicines where children cannot see or reach them. Always check each medication’s expiration date, and dispose of expired medications properly. Rice County’s “Take It to the Box” program maintains two medication disposal drop boxes available 24/7 at the Northfield and Faribault Police Departments.

Read the label every time you buy. Products can change rapidly – ingredients, conditions treated, dosages. Know what you’re getting.

The same way you rely on your pharmacist for help with prescription medicines, you can tap that expertise for help with OTC medicines, too. After all, your pharmacist is part of your health care team.

Tricia Hagedorn, Pharm.D, BCOP, is a pharmacist at Northfield Hospital.

Drug Facts

Active Ingredients/Purposes
- Make sure the Active Ingredients aren’t the same as those in another medicine already being used.
- If the medicine contains more than one Active Ingredient, read the Purposes of each active ingredient to make sure all of the active ingredients are needed for the problem(s) or symptom(s) to be treated.

Uses
- Find medicine that treats only the problem(s) or symptom(s) to be treated.

Warnings
- Is there any reason this medicine shouldn’t be used?
- Is there any reason to talk to a doctor or pharmacist before using this medicine?

Directions
- Find the correct dose on the package.
- Make sure liquid medicine comes with a measuring tool (such as dosing or measuring cup). If not, ask for one at the pharmacy. Spoons made for eating and cooking may give the wrong dose and shouldn’t be used.

Source: FDA.gov
Spring-clean your kitchen for better nutrition

You washed the dishes, the counters, and the floor. How about a fresh start with your food, too?

Research shows that a clean, organized kitchen helps you eat healthier overall. Here are a few tips to get started.

Refrigerator and freezer. Remove all items one section at a time. Wipe down shelves, drawers, and sticky jars with hot, soapy water. Toss foods that are past their prime.

Early this year, the food industry began streamlining freshness dating, adopting two standard phrases. “Best if used by” describes product quality: The product may not taste as expected, but it’s safe to consume. “Use by” applies to the few products that are highly perishable and/or have a food safety concern over time. These products should be consumed by the date listed on the package – and disposed of after that date.

If the item’s “best by” date has just passed but you don’t notice an off odor or discoloration, it’s likely still safe to eat. Eggs can be eaten 2-3 weeks longer, milk is good one week longer, and butter is good one month longer than the sell by date.

Leftovers and open lunch meat should be tossed after three days. Opened condiments are generally good for 6-12 months.

Frozen foods are safe for a long time but the quality can diminish. Use up freezer-burned meats in soups, stews, and casseroles.

To stay organized, write the date on the package when the food is opened.

Pantry and spice rack. Canned and boxed items like cake mix, rice, and instant potatoes last longest stored in a cool, dark place. Items past date likely are safe but may not be as tasty. Don’t eat food from dented or rusted cans, or boxes that have been exposed to moisture.

Cooking oils stored in a cool, dark place are best within 1-3 months of opening. Dried herbs and spices are generally good for 2-4 years after opening.

And remember the most important food safety tip: When in doubt, throw it out!
Meet our new partners and providers

We have some new partners that are close to your heart...and your hips and knees.

Northfield Hospital + Clinics has partnered with Minneapolis Heart Institute® to provide cardiology care for patients in the greater Northfield area. Separately, NH+C has teamed with Summit Orthopedics to provide orthopedic care across the region and in the south Metro.

First, your heart: Cardiologists from Minneapolis Heart Institute® provide clinic care at our Northfield Clinic, working closely with NH+C providers to ensure the highest quality of cardiac care for our patients.

Ten cardiologists from Minneapolis Heart Institute® see patients in the Northfield Clinic. For a biography of each provider, visit northfieldhospital.org/cardiology. To make an appointment, call the Northfield Clinic at 507-646-1494.

Now, those bones of yours: Through our partnership with Summit, orthopedic patients continue to receive care from familiar providers in familiar surroundings. Five well-known orthopedic surgeons care for patients through Northfield Hospital and NH+C clinics:

- Robert Shepley, MD
- Bradley Wille, MD
- Hans Bengtson, MD
- Clinton Muench, MD
- Erik Stroemer, MD

They perform surgeries at Northfield Hospital’s Surgery Center, and see patients in NH+C clinics in Northfield, Lakeville and Farmington – with physical therapy support from Rehabilitation Services in Northfield and Lakeville.

The five surgeons shifted to Summit Orthopedics from Orthopaedic & Fracture Clinic, which had been NH+C’s partner for orthopedic services. The transition of care is seamless for their patients. To make an appointment, call 507-646-8900.

New providers expand clinic care

You’ll see some new faces at our clinics, too.

The Women’s Health Center welcomes OB/GYN specialist Shannon Lau, MD, FACOG providing expert care for women of all ages. Dr. Lau believes the most important element of her work is to listen to each patient with compassion, and tailor medical advice to their specific priorities.

“I strive to promote the wellness of the whole person,” Dr. Lau says. “I truly enjoy getting to know my patients and am grateful to be a part of their lives.”

Dr. Lau is board certified by the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology and a Fellow of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. To make an appointment in Northfield or Lakeville, call 507-646-1478.

Mukti B. Patel, PA-C joins the Farmington Clinic in May. As a Certified Physician Assistant, Mukti’s passion is primary care, using a team approach with her patients to develop treatment plans for compliance and well-being. “It’s important to me to educate and empower patients to want to take care of themselves and improve their quality of life,” she says. Mukti holds a Masters in Medical Sciences from Nova Southeastern University in Florida. To make an appointment with Mukti, call the Farmington Clinic at 651-460-2300.

Sarah Lybarger, PA-C joins the Lakeville Clinic in June. As a Certified Physician Assistant, Sarah cares for adults and children. She believes that working with patients in a collaborative effort is essential in guiding them to achieve their medical and mental health goals. “I strive to recognize the individual needs of each patient,” she says. Sarah’s professional interests are wellness and preventative medicine; mental health; and patient and community education. To make an appointment with Sarah, call the Lakeville Clinic at 952-469-0500.

Are you a partner too?

“Include Always” is a new patient partnership program that will help shape how NH+C provides care. Patients and family members can participate through our Patient & Family Advisory Council, which will meet quarterly to identify topics of interest in building the partnership with NH+C staff and providers. This could include feedback on our physical environment, programs and services, patient and family experiences, and care delivery processes that affect care quality and safety.

To be considered for the Patient & Family Advisory Council, complete the application at northfieldhospital.org/patient-advocates. Questions? Contact us at 507-646-1509 or patientadvocate@northfieldhospital.org.

Learn more at includealways.org
Clinics, Hospital + Specialty Care close to you

Clinics + Urgent Care

Farmington Clinic
4645 Knutsen Drive, Tel: 651-460-2300

Lakeville Clinic + URGENT CARE
9974 – 214th Street W, Tel: 952-469-0500

Lonsdale Clinic
103 15th Avenue SE, Tel: 507-744-3245

Northfield Clinic
2000 North Avenue, Tel: 507-646-1494

Specialty Care

Rehabilitation Clinics
Northfield: 1381 Jefferson Road, Tel: 507-646-8800
Lakeville: 9913 – 214th Street West, Tel: 952-985-2020

Northfield Eye Physicians + Surgeons
2019 Jefferson Road, Tel: 507-645-9202

Summit Orthopedics Clinic
1381 Jefferson Road, Tel: 507-646-8900

Women’s Health Center
2000 North Avenue, Tel: 507-646-1478

O’Halloran ENT Clinic – Faribault
1645 Lyndale Ave N, Tel: 952-469-0500

Hospital + Emergency

Northfield Hospital + Emergency
2000 North Avenue, Tel: 507-646-1000