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The Wopatas wanted to make a balanced decision

When their fourth child was born at Northfield Hospital, Scott and Allyson Wopata needed important financial information to make a medical decision. NH+C delivered.

“We had a few really complicated insurance scenarios, and the financial team went above and beyond in responding in the moment,” Scott says. Scott and Allyson needed help understanding their insurance coverage so they’d feel secure in making a decision. Scott asked for help at the Admissions desk. There, Bonnie Kurtt “sat down with me and my giant stack of insurance documents and she helped me frame the questions.” Then Bonnie connected Scott with Denise Thom in Patient Financial Services, who handles billing and typically doesn’t work directly with patients.

“For 15 minutes she walked through everything, and asked questions I hadn’t thought to ask,” Scott says. “Then she said, ‘I now understand everything that’s in place and we’ll take care of all that administratively. Don’t worry about it.’ I still had to make decisions, but now I had the information to do it.”

Allyson was able to stay, and “we just focused on Sam for the next 24 hours,” Scott says. “We had a clear path forward.” (Sam went home healthy, no sign of group B strep.)

With each birth, “we felt supported in all our decisions,” Allyson adds. “You just feel cared-for, that everyone is doing a great job making you feel comfortable and secure.”

In the back office, too.

When Lily (now almost 10 years old) was born at 34 weeks, Allyson was helicoptered up to Abbott Northwestern to deliver. At the Birth Center in Northfield, “they were all calm, and took it one step at a time” prepping Allyson for transfer, she recalls. Scott adds, “They made it super simple.”

Having four babies at the Birth Center taught Allyson and Scott that every experience is different. Clara’s birth in 2012 and Levinia’s birth in 2015 were swift and simple, with excellent care from the Birth Center team. During Sam’s labor, “my nurse was really helpful in suggesting options – the bathtub, a birthing ball – until something appealed to me. She didn’t list a million things; she read my face and made one suggestion at a time until something seemed to stick.”

With each birth, “we couldn’t afford a bad decision. But I was making a really big decision with very limited information.”

Scott Wopata, Dundas

Learn more: http://bit.ly/nhc-insurance
“Fourth trimester” adds extra care for new moms

Having a baby changes everything.

Now, new moms get early attention on how that’s affecting their mental health and overall well-being.

A “fourth trimester” checkup has been added to pregnancy and postpartum care, part of your birth experience through the Women’s Health Center.

Fourth trimester care is a growing priority nationally to address mental health, physical health, and adjustment to life with a new addition to the family. All women should have contact with their OB team within three weeks after giving birth, recommends the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG).

“If we can catch women having issues at two weeks rather than six weeks out, they may be more successful, have less emotional turmoil, and be less likely to develop conditions like anxiety or depression,” says Christie Brockman, RN, the clinic triage nurse who initiated fourth trimester checkups in the Women’s Health Center.

“We see patients 10 to 15 times throughout their pregnancy, and then they have their baby, and we say, ‘We’ll see you back in a month and a half,’” Brockman adds. “Most moms have some questions or concerns; this is a welcome opportunity to address them.”

New moms see a nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or midwife for the fourth trimester visit. The appointment runs 30-40 minutes, and covers:

• Depression screening (using PHQ-9, a nine-question survey widely used in primary care to screen for the presence and severity of depression)
• Past history of anxiety, depression or other mental health issues that increase the risk of post-partum depression
• Physical and emotional recovery from delivery
• Infant feeding and care concerns
• Sleep and fatigue
• Mom’s social support system
• Bowel and bladder function
• Vaginal bleeding

A physical exam is done only if needed.

The provider may ask:
• How was your birth experience?
• Are you bonding OK with your baby?
• Are you feeling overwhelmed or isolated?
• How is your baby doing?
• Do you have any concerns about yourself or your baby?

If needed, the provider can connect you with resources including mental health counseling, pelvic health, or a lactation specialist.

The traditional six-week visit continues to be a comprehensive visit, with full physical exam and addressing all post-partum needs.

The fourth trimester visit is part of pregnancy care for patients of Women’s Health Center. (Check with your insurance carrier to see how it’s covered for you.)

Fourth trimester visits let moms know they have support. “It’s hard to reach out and ask for help when you’re overwhelmed and focused on caring for your new baby, and you think you’re supposed to be fine until your next appointment in six weeks,” Brockman says.

Even moms who are feeling well appreciate the check-in: “First-time moms sometimes just need reassurance that they’re doing the right things,” Brockman says. “Even if everything’s going okay, it’s still hard to be a new mom.”

PELVIC HEALTH
AFTER CHILDBIRTH

Your pelvis works hard during pregnancy and childbirth. Physical therapy after birth can help the pelvis to recover, realign and get stronger after the baby is born.

NH+C’s Rehabilitation Services department has two physical therapists with expertise in pelvic health, treating pregnancy and post-partum concerns.

They also treat:
• Pelvic floor dysfunction
• Pelvic/abdominal pain (urinating, bowel movements, periods)
• Diastasis Recti (a common postpartum condition)
• Low back pain and Sacroiliac joint dysfunction
• Sexual dysfunction
• Urinary and fecal issues (including incontinence)
• Pelvic organ prolapse

Jen Dickerson, PT and Cindy Konich, PT provide a skilled, sensitive evaluation, then create a personalized therapy regimen to meet your specific needs.

No problem or question is too awkward. A referral for physical therapy is required.


Make an appointment: (507) 646-8800

Women’s Health Center:
(507) 646-1478
Krystle Eilen was hungry for advice. Her baby Eli was just hungry.

When Krystle nursed her newborn, he ate well but never seemed to fill up. “After a while I had a hard time keeping up with him,” Krystle says.

She mentioned it to Jennifer Kleine, NH+C’s lactation consultant who provides appointments at the Birth Center for all parents with breastfeeding concerns. Krystle asked Jennifer a few questions at Baby Talk, the Community Ed program where Jennifer consults each week. “Jennifer invited me to make an appointment so we could spend time one on one, in a more relaxed setting,” Krystle says.

There, Jennifer weighed Eli before and after Krystle nursed him. Eli had eaten just 3 ounces, and “he still seemed hungry,” Krystle says.

Jennifer recommended a few ways to build Krystle’s milk supply: Nurse Eli on both breasts, and power pump – a one-hour schedule of pumping and resting each day, to stimulate production. “My body recognized that this is how much milk it needs to produce for Eli,” Krystle says.

Three days later at their follow up appointment, Eli ate 5 ounces. Krystle was relieved – and reassured.

“Jennifer has so many great tips. She just makes it much less stressful,” Krystle says. “I never felt silly asking questions, and she was so calm and positive.”

Krystle breastfed her two older children – Kelby, now 6, and Adelia, now 3 – and muddled through tough times without help. “Kelby had colic; that was super hard,” Krystle recalls. With Adelia, “I joined Baby Talk and it was so helpful. But the lactation consultant was only available during Baby Talk classes. Now, it’s so great to be able to make appointments at the Birth Center with Jennifer.

“It’s a blessing to have someone so nurturing and calm to help you through those hard times.”

The best part? Having appointments right away, to make sure Eli was thriving. “I didn’t have to wait a whole week for more help,” says Krystle, who lives in Hampton. “And Jennifer was focused just on us. “It was the best experience ever.”

“Jennifer just makes it much less stressful. I never felt silly asking questions, and she was so calm and positive.”

Krystle Eilen, Hampton

BREASTFEEDING HELP, BOARD-CERTIFIED

NH+C’s lactation services are led by board-certified lactation consultant Jennifer Kleine, RN, BSN, IBCLC.

Jennifer offers one-on-one appointments in the comfortable, relaxed setting of a private office at the Birth Center. Services include:

- How to breastfeed
- Breastfeeding at work or school
- Problems with the breast or nipple
- Low milk supply
- Pumping and storing breast milk
- Bottle feeding and giving expressed milk
- Taking medicines while breastfeeding
- What to do when the baby doesn’t want to breastfeed
- What to do when the baby is slow to gain weight
- How to wean your baby from breastfeeding

All women are welcome, wherever their baby was born. Lactation services are often covered by insurance.

Appointments: (507) 646-1216
Dr. Gerard O’Halloran helped them both.
On the same day.

Rebecca and Tony share an office at All Flex in Northfield. Rebecca had suffered from face pain and headaches for years. Tony had trouble breathing from a broken nose years ago. Both had trouble sleeping.

They both had surgery – on the same day – with ENT specialist Dr. O’Halloran. Different conditions, same result: Pain-free breathing, and healthy sleep.

Rebecca spent seven years trying to figure out what caused her headaches, facial pain, fatigue, and dizziness. “I was tired a lot; I couldn’t do yoga because I had so much pressure in my face, and I was getting headaches all the time,” she says. Rebecca saw a cardiologist and neurologist; she had blood tests and scans and exams, always coming up empty.

Finally, Dr. O’Halloran had some answers. Rebecca had a deviated septum and bone spur, plus one very narrow sinus; meanwhile, misshapen tissue blocked her nasal passage and pushed painfully on her face.

Surgery could correct them all.

Meanwhile, Tony struggled with trouble sleeping. Several years ago, a doctor told him he must have broken his nose as a kid. (Tony – and his mom – don’t know when that might have happened.) Tony chose then not to have surgery. He’s slept badly ever since.

“I’m very hesitant to go to the doctor, so I thank Rebecca for all the stuff she was going through,” Tony says. “It made me think, ‘Gosh darn it, I’ll just go to Dr. O’Halloran too and see what he has to say.’”

Dr. O’Halloran told Tony it was one of the worst cases of deviated septum he’s seen. “He examined me and his first comment was, ‘Woah, that’s pretty bad,’” Tony laughs. His turbinates were inflamed, blocking his breathing even more. Tony’s options: Live with it; try medication; have surgery to straighten the septum and trim the turbinates.

“I definitely didn’t want to take medication for the rest of my life,” Tony says. “If I could do something more permanent via surgery, that’s what I wanted to do. If it can help even one of my symptoms, it’s totally worth it.”

Both surgeries went well. Changes measured in millimeters made a big difference.

“I immediately slept better, and I have not had a headache since,” Rebecca says. “I wake up and feel like, ‘Wow, I slept last night.’ It makes a huge difference.”

Tony’s sleeping better, too. Surgery was quick – “in less than five hours, I was headed home” – and his energy is back.

By coincidence, they scheduled surgery for the same day. “We could have carpooled,” Tony laughs. (They didn’t.)

Dr. O’Halloran and his staff “were fantastic, really helpful,” Tony says. When a sneeze made his nose bleed, a quick call to staff reassured him not to worry. When Rebecca wondered if it was OK to get on a plane, a quick text to Dr. O’Halloran gave her the thumbs up to fly.

“They get back to you so quickly, which is important when you’re anxious about something,” Rebecca says. “It’s nerve-wracking to have surgery on your face – by your brain and your eyes. But Dr. O’Halloran is so knowledgeable and his demeanor is so reassuring that it makes you feel comfortable.”

Tony agrees: “Dr. O’Halloran even gave recommendations to have surgery early in the year – before cold and flu season, and to take full advantage of your health insurance if you need some follow up care. His honesty made me really comfortable with him.”

Their advice? “If you have pain, get it checked out,” Rebecca advises. “It’s not worth just living with it. I wish I’d gone to an ENT six years ago.”

Tony agrees: “It’s not worth toughing it out.”

Oh, and maybe carpool.

ENT appointments: 952-469-0500
Planning next steps for your new knee or hip

When you have orthopedic surgery, you want to feel at home with your new joint as quickly – and smoothly – as possible.

Improvements in anesthesia and surgical techniques have shortened recovery time for joint replacements. Patients typically leave the hospital within a day or two after surgery.

That means most of your recovery happens outside the hospital, usually at home.

Before surgery, we help you prepare for daily life after surgery to ensure your best recovery no matter how soon you leave the hospital.

A pre-op planning session reviews what to expect before, during and after surgery, and helps determine your home care needs. The pre-op planning team – led by surgical nurse and Patient Education Coordinator Linda Rowan, RN, BSN – includes a physical therapist, pharmacist and social worker who meet with you and your family members three to four weeks before your surgery date. Together, you review medical details of your surgery – plus logistical details for your recovery after discharge.

Most patients go directly home from the hospital. Some transfer to a rehabilitation facility or skilled nursing facility to recuperate; Medicare coverage for this is very specific. In 2019, Medicare tightened the requirements for in-patient care after surgery in order to improve patient care and reduce healthcare costs. (Your length of hospital stay is based only on your medical need for hospital-level care as defined by Medicare guidelines.)

Planning before surgery for what you may need after surgery is an important part of your surgery care. Pre-op planning also helps caregivers – often, a spouse with their own health needs – feel confident that they have a solid plan to care for their loved one at home while taking care of themselves, too.

Three steps lay the foundation for successful recovery at home:

Anticipate. Your pre-op planning team will review details you may not have thought about – stairs, loose rugs, bathroom access, high kitchen shelves, your favorite chair. A room-by-room checklist helps you prepare your home now for your recovery later.

Prepare. Line up your support network, including someone to stay with you for the first few days. Family members who plan to take time off work to help you may want to arrange FMLA leave with their employer ahead of time (through the Family and Medical Leave Act).

Practice. We help you learn the skills you’ll use after surgery. A physical therapist works with you on walking, stairs, and car transfers plus exercises for your new joint. An occupational therapist teaches you how to shower and dress. “Northfield Hospital is unique in teaching you these skills beforehand, and then having you and your family practice after surgery so you’ll be confident doing it at home,” says physical therapist Heidi Auge, DPT. “Knowing what to expect reduces anxiety.”

Get your body in shape too, so you go into surgery strong. You may benefit from physical therapy “to get you in your best physical condition before surgery,” Auge says. “That speeds up – and maximizes – your recovery afterwards.”

Welcome home.
Clinics, Hospital + Specialty Care close to you

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

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

Express Care Clinic – Northfield
706 Division Street, Tel: 507-646-6700

Specialty Care

Breast Care Center – Northfield
2000 North Avenue, Tel: 507-646-1143

Cancer Care & Infusion Center – Northfield
2000 North Avenue, Tel: 507-646-6979

Endoscopy – Northfield
2000 North Avenue, Tel: 507-646-1201

Faribault Clinic – ENT and Orthopedics
1980 30th St. NW (at Lyndale Ave.)
ENT: 952-469-0500
Orthopedics: 507-334-1601

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

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

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

Sleep Center – Northfield
2000 North Avenue, Tel: 507-646-1099

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

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