



COVID vaccines:

Be ready

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There's a brighter horizon ahead.

We have come through an incredibly challenging year together. Now, with safe and effective COVID vaccines, we begin to see light at the end of this tunnel.

We all share a common goal: To keep ourselves, our families, and our community safe. We all want this pandemic to end as soon and completely as possible. Vaccines are one of the most promising avenues to do that, and let us return to our pre-pandemic life. The more people vaccinated, the less COVID can spread...the faster we can return to normal.



Steve Underdahl

As you know, the state and federal governments drive the vaccine delivery process and timeline. It's an

enormous undertaking, with detailed logistics at every level – national, state, local. Vaccine rollout may happen differently in different states based on federal guidelines that each state adapts based on capacity and supplies in that state.

NH+C is working in coordination with Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) plus regional and local Public Health to help vaccinate individuals based on MDH's priority groups.

All Minnesotans will have access to the vaccine. Rollout plans will continue to evolve. You can get updates at mn.gov/covid19

COVID is still widespread. Until enough people are vaccinated for widespread immunity, we all need to continue our precautions: wear a mask, keep your distance, stay away from others if you're sick.

In the coming months, we will serve our patients and community as best we can with the resources we have available. Your safety and health are always our top priority.

We will continue to be a source of accurate, credible medical information.

We will continue to move forward, carefully and responsibly, to provide the best health care possible however circumstances may change.

I encourage you to continue taking care of yourself...and others. We're here when you need us.

Wishing you health and wellness in the year ahead.

Steve Underdahl
CEO and President
Northfield Hospital + Clinics

WHY WE'RE GETTING VACCINATED NH+C providers and staff, in their own words...





COVID vaccines: FAQ

COVID vaccines are rolling out. We want to help you be ready, with clear information and answers to your questions.

Who should get a COVID vaccine?

Everyone over age 16 should get a vaccine. It's a safe and effective way to build immunity against contracting COVID. This protects you, and others: The more people vaccinated, the less COVID can spread...the faster we can return to normal.

You need two doses, 3-4 weeks apart, depending on which vaccine you receive. It's important to get both doses, on time, for full effectiveness.

Are the vaccines safe?

Yes. Having a safe and effective vaccine is the top priority for us all. The science behind the vaccine (messenger RNA) has been in development for over a decade. And all the steps of research and testing have been followed to establish the effectiveness and safety of the vaccines. Clinical trials had tens of thousands of volunteers (for Pfizer, about 40,000; for Moderna, 30,000) rather than a few thousand, for more data in a shorter time. Plus, federal funding enabled production of vaccines at the same time as clinical trials, so millions of doses were available quickly after each vaccine was proven safe and effective.

How effective are the vaccines?

A two-shot series gives 95% protection against contracting COVID. (The small percent who do get COVID have a mild case.) Plus, the vaccines are 100% effective in preventing severe COVID disease and death.

How much time is needed to take full effect?

It takes about two weeks after the second dose to build maximum immunity. It's important to get both doses.

What are the side effects?

Possible side effects are typical of what happens with other vaccines: low-grade fever, body aches, headache, fatigue, joint pain, soreness at the injection site. Side effects may be greater with the second dose. Side effects may feel like flu and might even affect your daily activities, but they should go away in a few days.

Side effects are a sign that the vaccine is working: Your body is building immunity without having an actual infection or being infectious to others.

Can I get COVID from the vaccine?

No. The vaccine does not use live virus. You cannot catch COVID from the vaccine. It's possible to become infected through community spread shortly after vaccination, before the vaccine has had enough time to build immunity (typically about two weeks). It's important to keep using precautions after your vaccination: Wear a mask, keep distance, wash your hands.

Does my vaccine protect my loved ones?

Yes. This is one of the best ways to protect yourself and everyone around you. The more people who get vaccinated, the less disease there is to spread. Stopping the spread of COVID gets us closer to the end of the pandemic.

After I'm vaccinated, can I still spread COVID?

We don't know yet. That's why we need to continue other prevention methods along with vaccine: wear masks, keep distance, don't gather, wash your hands.

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COVID is still widespread. These precautions help everyone. Until enough people are vaccinated for widespread immunity, we all need to continue our precautions.

Do I still have to wear a mask?

Yes. Keep wearing your mask to protect others who are not yet vaccinated. Keep using all precautions: wear a mask, keep distance, don't gather, wash your hands.

I've already had COVID. Do I still need to get vaccinated?

Yes. We don't know how much immunity you get from having had the virus, or how long it lasts. Vaccine gives a clear, predictable level of protection. Plus, a second, new infection is possible without vaccination. You can become sick again, or make others sick.

If you were recently diagnosed with COVID, talk to your primary care provider about when you should get vaccinated.

I wouldn't get very sick if I got COVID. Do I still need to get vaccinated?

Yes. There's no way to know how COVID will affect you, even if you are not at increased risk of severe complications. You can also spread the virus to family, friends, and others around you whether or not you have symptoms. Your vaccine protects others, too.

I have allergies. Should I get vaccinated?

If you have allergies so severe that you carry an EpiPen, talk with your provider and allergist about your options.

I'm pregnant. Should I get vaccinated?

Yes. Based on how mRNA vaccines work, experts believe they are unlikely to pose a specific risk for people who are pregnant. Getting COVID poses a bigger risk: Pregnant people who get COVID are at higher risk of severe illness or death, and COVID can affect your baby's health. (Source: CDC) Talk with your provider if you have concerns.

I'm breastfeeding. Should I get vaccinated?

The CDC says that mRNA vaccines are not thought to be a risk to the breastfeeding infant. (There are no data at this time on the safety of COVID vaccines in lactating women or on the effects of mRNA vaccines on the breastfed infant or on milk production/excretion.) People who are breastfeeding and in a group that's recommended to get a COVID vaccine (such as healthcare workers) can choose to be vaccinated.

Does the vaccine affect fertility?

No. No vaccine affects fertility or sterility, in women or men, girls or boys. Getting sick with COVID can affect sperm count and motility in men.

How does the vaccine work?

Pfizer's and Moderna's vaccines uses "messenger RNA" (mRNA) to teach cells how to make a protein that triggers an immune response inside the body. That immune response produces antibodies that protect you from getting infected if the real virus enters your body.

Can mRNA alter my DNA?

No. mRNA does not affect or interact with your DNA in any way. It never enters the nucleus of the cell, where DNA is kept. Instead, the vaccine uses mRNA to work with the body's natural defenses to safely develop immunity.

It's all so new. What if I want to wait and see how other people do with the vaccine?

We understand, new things make people wary – it's a survival instinct. Remember: COVID is a deadly, highly contagious disease. We now have safe, effective vaccines to prevent it. It is safer to get a vaccine than it is to get COVID. We encourage you to get a vaccine when it is available to you. This is one of the best ways to protect yourself and everyone around you.

Keep yourself and others safe

It will take a long time for everyone to get vaccinated. Even after being vaccinated, you still have to do all these things to help keep your community safe:



Wear a mask.



Wash your hands.



Stay 6 feet from others.



Stay home if you feel sick.



*Rollout plans are evolving.
Get updates at: mn.gov/covid19*

As COVID vaccines become available, here's what to know about getting yours:

When I can get the vaccine?

All Minnesotans will have access to the vaccine. The order is based on who is most vulnerable to COVID. Timing depends on how quickly vaccine is available. The federal government manages distribution to states. See updates on timing and phases at MDH's website: mn.gov/covid19... look for the page "Who's Getting Vaccinated?"

The state and federal government drive the vaccine delivery process and timeline. Vaccine rollout is happening differently in different states based on federal guidelines that each state adapts based on capacity and supplies in that state.

When will kids be able to get a vaccine?

CDC officials expect children and young teens (under 16) could have a vaccine available in the second half of 2021. Researchers need to examine the dosages, interval between doses, and the number of doses that work best in children.

What happens when I get my vaccine?

When you get the vaccine, you and your healthcare worker both need to wear masks that cover your nose and mouth. Stay 6 feet away from others while inside and in lines.

You'll be given a fact sheet that tells you more about the specific vaccine you're being offered, to help you understand the risks and benefits of receiving that specific vaccine. The healthcare worker will review a few health



questions with you before your injection. After injection, you'll be monitored for any side effects for 15 minutes. Ask: When is my second dose due?

What will it cost?

There is no charge for vaccine doses from CDC; these doses are funded by the federal government. There may be a charge for getting the shot, to cover administration costs for the clinic or hospital. Vaccine administration costs will be billed to insurance. For patients who don't have coverage, administration costs may qualify for government funding.

THREE REASONS TO GET THE VACCINE

- **We share a social responsibility to protect others**
You might not be at high risk for becoming seriously ill or dying from COVID, but we all have a responsibility not to spread it to others who are at high risk. You can spread COVID without even becoming sick yourself. The more people who get vaccinated, the fewer people there are to spread COVID.
- **Vaccines are the best way to develop immunity as safely as possible**
COVID will continue to exist, a viral illness in our world like chickenpox, measles, and influenza. We

will all need to become immune to this virus at some point in our lives. Science shows the vaccine is the safest way to build immunity.

- **Widespread immunity helps us get back to normal**
When 75-80% of the population is vaccinated, the country will develop widespread immunity that protects us all. The sooner we each get vaccinated to protect our family, friends, and neighbors, the sooner we can reopen and gather together once again.



21 things to appreciate

It's been a long journey to get to 2021. With brighter horizons ahead, here are a few of our favorite things to savor now and in the months to come.

1 COVID vaccines! "This is how we will end the pandemic," says Dr. Ben Flannery, a pediatrician with deep knowledge – and respect – for vaccines. "The Pfizer and Moderna vaccinations are amazing," adds Dr. Katherine Helgen, a physician leader of our COVID response team. "They prevent 95% of symptomatic COVID disease, and they're 100% effective in preventing severe disease and death."

All Minnesotans will have access to the vaccine. Rollout plans are evolving. Get updates at mn.gov/covid19

Ready for yours? Got questions? See page 3 for some answers.

2 Birth Center expansion...expands. We just finished Phase 2, with a new nursery and dedicated operating room for Cesarean sections (and twins!). Coming this spring: new waiting room, plus remodeling of original patient rooms. Families are loving the spaces we added last fall: Water Birth Suite, new labor & delivery rooms, and new post-

partum rooms...all with soaking tubs, baby bath sinks, fridge, room darkening blinds and scenic views.

3 Wound healing, close to home. Our new Wound Healing Center is on track to open in March. It takes special expertise and frequent treatments to heal chronic wounds. We'll make it straightforward, without the long drive. (See page 9 for details.)

4 Doctor visits, at home. Had a Video Visit yet? It's a face-to-face appointment with your provider via phone, tablet or computer. Personalized care, from the comfort and privacy of home. Our clinics had 2,217 Video Visits in our first nine months of them; we're wired for even more in 2021.

5 Doctor visits, on the go. eCare is a new way to get care anytime, anywhere for common illnesses. Use your phone or computer to fill out an eCare interview; get a diagnosis and treatment plan in about an hour. No appointment, video chat, or app needed.

6 Masks. Yep, still. Vaccines are the safest way to build immunity. When 75-80% of the population is vaccinated against COVID, the country will develop widespread immunity that protects us all. Until then, keep wearing your mask to protect others who are not yet vaccinated. Keep using all



in 2021

precautions: wear a mask, keep distance, don't gather, wash your hands.

7 Cute babies in colorful helmets. Some babies get a flat head from lying too much in one position. (It's common.) Helmets can fix that. Our new Plagiocephaly Clinic makes it comfortable and convenient to treat babies close to home. A pediatrician, physical therapist and orthotist (who makes custom helmets) work together to evaluate baby and make a treatment plan. (You pick the helmet color.) Make an appointment: (507) 646-8800

8 Land of 10,000 injections. Sports medicine specialist Scott Koehler has helped a lot of patients relieve their back and joint pain. A LOT. Over 15 years, Dr. Koehler has delivered spinal and joint injections at NH+C's Surgery Center...10,000 of them. Ahhhh.

9 Sleep. Healthy sleep helps you manage stress (even pandemic-level stress). But stress makes it hard to sleep. Having trouble catching ZZZs? Keep phones, computers, TV out of the bedroom...turn off electronics 30-45 minutes before bedtime...avoid caffeine after 5:00 pm...avoid large meals or exercise before bed...keep bedroom temp below 75 degrees (cooler air makes it easier to sleep). G'night.

10 Orthopedics . . . all day (and evening) long. Our orthopedics team will see you now...in the evening. Yay for evening hours in Northfield to 7:00 pm – plus daytime appointments in Northfield, Faribault, Lakeville, Farmington...and now Kyle Smisek, PA-C in Lonsdale, too. (Hi, Lonsdale friends!)

We work with all providers, health systems, and insurance carriers. We welcome patients from Allina, Mayo, Fairview, Park Nicollet and more. Make your own appointment directly: (507) 646-8900...For Faribault appointments: (507) 334-1601

11 The cleaning crew. COVID precautions keep our environment safe for patients and staff. Screenings, PPE, masks for everyone, distance, special spaces for respiratory care...and rigorous cleaning. You might not see the cleaning crew, but you're glad they're here. So are we.

12 See you in Faribault. Orthopedics, ENT, family medicine favorite Dr. David McIntyre...we keep adding to our Faribault Clinic because, with primary and specialty care together, providers can collaborate on your care. P.S. We greet you by name, and we're pretty good listeners. Appointments: (507) 334-1601

13 A new way to treat knee pain. Radiofrequency ablation (RFA) is a non-surgical option for chronic or osteoarthritic knee pain. The pain relief typically lasts longer than steroid injections, and is significantly less invasive than a knee replacement. Available in the Surgery Center through Dr. Scott Koehler. (See page 12 for more.)

14 Home-cooked meals. Want some new, healthy recipes? Our dietitian nutritionists deliver: northfieldhospital.org/recipes

21 things: continued

15 **Bright, spacious Northfield Clinic and Women's Health Center.** Our 2020 expansion added 12 new exam rooms and put the Lab up front (quick, convenient lab-only appointments). It's a great setup for patient-centered, team-based care.

16 **Call the midwife.** Our certified nurse midwife provides pre-natal care, coaches moms through labor, and delivers babies. Jessica Bohren, APRN, CNM encourages natural childbirth through empowerment, attentive waiting and natural alternatives. Give birth with minimal intervention, with the resources of a hospital or doctor close by if needed.

17 **WFH works out well...for patients.** A lot of NH+C's behind-the-scenes staff are working from home to keep our buildings clear for patients and direct-care staff. Cheers for technology that keeps the work behind patient care accurate, efficient, secure. (Do the folks who don't wear scrubs now wear sweatpants in our home offices? Maybe.)

18 **Efren Maldonado, and Ella.** Efren and his German Shepherd Ella have greeted NH+C staff every morning since the pandemic began, with a wave and a smile. Efren stands near the hospital driveway waving as staff arrive, cheering us on with grace and energy. His wife Pam joins Efren and Ella some mornings. "If I don't wave, it's because I'm not awake yet," she jokes.

"I'm so thankful for the nurses and staff," Efren says. "My daughter is a traveling nurse, so we hear of all the things nurses are going through in hospitals. I really appreciate these people putting their lives at stake to help others. I am so grateful for that." Thank you, Efren. You warm us up.

19 **Txt.** We made texting easy...to make your appointment, remind you about it, cancel it if you want. JSYK.

20 **Water birth.** Labor and deliver in a spacious tub of warm water. Calm, soothing, easy for your partner and your care team to assist from the tub's side. "The tub made it very relaxing, calming even when it felt chaotic in my body," says Veronica Barth, the first to deliver her baby in our tub. (Meet Addison, Golden Gophers' newest fan, on page 10.)

21 **Staff, staff, staff.** Dedication and commitment to our patients has carried NH+C through many challenging months. They go above and beyond – and then keep going. "We are staffed with dedicated proven superheroes," says Louise Murray, RN, Director of Medical/Surgical Department. "Our team is a family taking care of the community and each other," says Lisa Lang, Director of Diagnostic Imaging Services.

Happy 2021, friends. It's our privilege to care for you.





Wound healing on the horizon

NH+C is launching a new Wound Healing Center with specialized treatment for chronic wounds.

The Wound Healing Center is on track to open at Northfield Hospital in March.

Our providers and staff have specialized training in treating difficult-to-heal wounds (wounds that last longer than 2-4 weeks) with advanced wound care and hyperbaric medicine.

Chronic wounds are a common complication of diabetes and obesity (and less commonly, radiation therapy). Non-healing wounds stem from inadequate circulation, poorly functioning veins, and immobility. They diminish quality of life, and may even lead to amputation. Healing these wounds requires a specialized approach.

NH+C's Wound Healing Center will offer state-of-the-art treatments including hyperbaric oxygen therapy, debridement, topical wound therapy, growth-factor therapy, tissue therapy, dressing selection, and patient education. Each patient receives a personalized wound treatment program.

Treatment requires a series of appointments over several weeks – typically, weekly appointments for 10-14 weeks until the wound heals. Specialized care close to home makes wound care more accessible and convenient for patients in the communities we serve.

NH+C is partnering with Healogics, the leader in wound care. Chronic wounds we can treat:

- Diabetic foot ulcers and wounds
- Osteomyelitis (bone infections)
- Arterial ulcers
- Pressure ulcers
- Non-healing surgery wounds
- Radiation-related wounds
- Venous ulcers
- Neuropathic ulcers
- Ischemic ulcers
- Burns

The Wound Healing Center also will provide hyperbaric oxygen therapy for those patients who qualify. This therapy delivers 100% oxygen to the patient inside a pressurized chamber, enabling the lungs to take in more oxygen. The bloodstream carries the extra oxygen to the injured area to fight bacteria and stimulate growth factors and stem cells that promote healing. This requires daily appointments (about two hours) for 30-40 sessions (on average) until the wound heals.

Is wound healing right for you? Ask your primary care provider, home health nurse, diabetes specialist (endocrinologist), oncologist, or trusted member of your healthcare team. No referral is needed.

 **Make an appointment:**
507-646-6900



Veronica Barth decided the water was just fine

Veronica and husband Dylan wanted a water birth for their first baby.

But their south metro hospital had other plans, so Veronica switched at 20 weeks to Northfield Hospital's Birth Center. "Some friends had an amazing experience there, so we checked it out," Veronica says. "We wanted a low-intervention birth – unmedicated, but open to it if things didn't turn out that way."

A few days past her due date, labor came on fast. "We were planning to labor at home with a doula for a while, but everything came on so quickly it was really intense," Veronica says. The 25-minute drive from their Lakeville home "was so smooth and easy on I-35, no bumps or turns" to jostle her during contractions.

At the Birth Center, her birth team wanted to follow

the baby's heart rate with a wireless monitor that can go in the water tub. "All the monitors on my belly were waterproof so I could get right into the tub with them without having to adjust anything, which was awesome," Veronica says.

Laboring in the tub was "really peaceful, even with all the people in the room. We turned off all the lights; there were lights in tub so the midwife and nurse could see what they needed," she recalls. "We played music. It was so calming...a good environment that helped me stay calm.

"The tub made it very relaxing – calming, even when it felt chaotic in my body."

Certified nurse midwife Jessica Bohren, APRN, CNM supported Veronica's birth plan for low intervention and no medication. "Even when I was doubting during labor, she knew what I wanted and kept to the plan," Veronica says. "There was no doubt in Jessica's mind that we could do it, even when I was doubting it in the moment."

When it was time to push, Dylan sat behind Veronica outside the tub, supporting her weight (made lighter by floating in water) and holding her in his arms.

Addison was born alert and active. "They put her on my chest right away," Veronica says. "She was pink, and cried right away. She was finally with us, and it was so amazing."





After Addison was born, “they said ‘Get out of the tub when you’re ready.’ There was no rush,” Veronica says. “I handed the baby to Dylan, took my time getting out of the tub, went to the bed and delivered the placenta. I felt so good after she was born.”

Later, Veronica and Dylan nestled with Addison in their post-partum room with a queen bed (“my husband was happy to have a real bed to sleep in,” she laughs) and turned on the U of M Gophers basketball game. “Her first Gophers game! That felt really special to us.”

The Birth Center “felt like a small-town hospital in the best way: a very personal connection to our midwife and nurses. Nicole [Harris, RN] even texted us the next few days to see how we were doing. I thought, ‘We’re still on your mind when you’re not at work, when you’re with your family?’ It was so nice that it felt special to our nurses because it felt

“The tub made it very relaxing – calming, even when it felt chaotic in my body.”

Veronica Barth, Lakeville

special to us.”

Her advice for other first-time moms? “It was important to me to have as many options as possible for labor. The Birth Center has so many options for natural childbirth, plus medication and intervention if you need it.”

“Everyone was so welcoming, and the space is beautiful,” Veronica says. “We’ll definitely be coming to Northfield Hospital again when it’s time for baby Number Two.”

Another Gophers fan, no doubt.



Eric Lundin conquers knee

When Eric Lundin fixed his knee, it helped his whole body. (And his tennis game.)

Eric has arthritis in both knees. He's been getting injections of hyaluronic acid for over 10 years to lubricate the joints and manage the pain. His orthopedist, Dr. Hans Bengtson, also helped Eric manage pain with medications, moderation in activities, and home exercises.

Like a good pair of tennis shoes, the full range of treatments wore out. "I just couldn't move anymore on the tennis court," Eric says.

Dr. Bengtson suggested COOLIEF radiofrequency ablation, a new non-surgical procedure that uses water-cooled technology to safely deactivate the nerves in the knee responsible for sending pain signals to the brain. Dr. Bengtson referred Eric to sports medicine specialist Scott Koehler, MD to perform the procedure.

First, lidocaine injections pinpoint and numb exposed nerve endings to confirm that deactivating those nerves will relieve the pain. Then, the nerve endings are ablated (cauterized) to disrupt nerve pathways for long-term relief.

"The next day I walked four miles, pain free," Eric says. Even better: Eric could now do physical therapy...and prevent arthritis in his hips.

Knee pain had thrown off Eric's gait, causing his hip and gluteal muscles to atrophy. Physical therapist Joel Beithon, PT worked with Eric to strengthen his hip, gluteal, core, and knee muscles, improving Eric's stride and his neuromuscular control. "I couldn't have done physical therapy without the knee procedure first," Eric says. "Now I walk 3-6 miles every day, pain-free."

Eric has gotten "nearly complete pain relief," he says. (COOLIEF can't treat the arthritis under his kneecap, so he still has minimal discomfort there.) His only side effect: a bruise from the needle that cleared up in about a week. "Dr. Koehler clearly knows what he's doing with this new procedure. I'm so grateful that Northfield Hospital makes this possible so I can have it again if I need it." COOLIEF effects last up to 12 months and can be repeated multiple times. "That means in the coming years, I can have a really good quality of life," Eric says.

Eric had been considering full knee replacement at a relatively young age, his late 50s. He credits Dr. Bengtson for advising him to wait. "Maybe I'll eventually need knee replacement; if I do that when I'm older, the joints can last me the rest of my life."

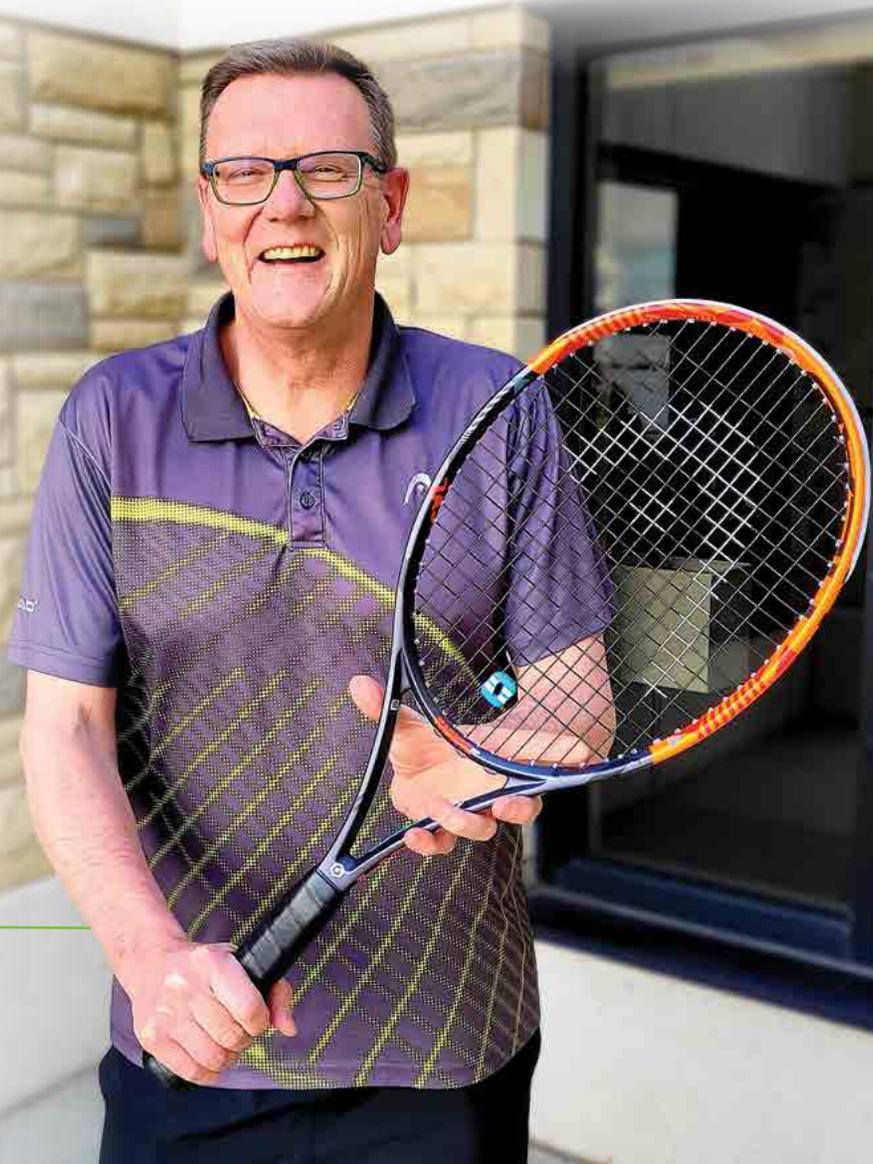
"Now I walk 3-6 miles every day,
pain-free."

Eric Lundin, Northfield

pain

Eric eagerly recommends COOLIEF. "There's nothing to lose," he says. "Even with severe arthritis, if it can take away even half the pain, you're that much more mobile." Staying mobile is key to preventing further arthritis and other health problems.

"I'm just so excited," Eric says. "This gives me hope that my quality of life – and my tennis game – will be lots better."



NEW NON-SURGICAL TREATMENT FOR KNEE PAIN

Radiofrequency ablation (RFA) is a non-surgical option for people with chronic or osteoarthritic knee pain. It can provide pain relief that typically lasts longer than steroid injections but is significantly less invasive than a knee replacement. It can be a good option if you're not a candidate – or not ready – for joint replacement. Sports medicine specialist Scott Koehler, MD does the procedure at Northfield Hospital's Surgery Center.

COOLIEF uses radiofrequency ablation to deactivate the nerves that are sending pain signals to the brain. It's clinically proven to provide long-term pain relief, improve physical functionality, and reduce drug use for pain management.

Benefits:

- Pain relief for up to 12 months
- Improved mobility
- Quick recovery time
- No opioid recovery medication
- No overnight hospital stay
- No incision

Procedure includes a clinic appointment for evaluation, then two visits for the procedure. First, lidocaine injections pinpoint and numb exposed nerve endings to confirm that deactivating those nerves will relieve the pain. Then, the nerve endings are ablated (cauterized) to disrupt nerve pathways for long-term relief.

If you have chronic knee pain, ask your provider for a referral or make your own appointment:

507-646-8900



Ashley Otte found giving birth

Ashley was expecting her second baby when COVID precautions were put in place at the Birth Center.

She worried that would make the birth experience harder than it was with her first baby.

Turns out it was even better.

Some things were the same: Ashley had hyperemesis with both pregnancies – extreme, persistent nausea that required a PICC line for intravenous nutrition.

Some things were different: The Birth Center had new, huge rooms with big windows and homey amenities. “You almost feel like you’re in a hotel,” Ashley says.

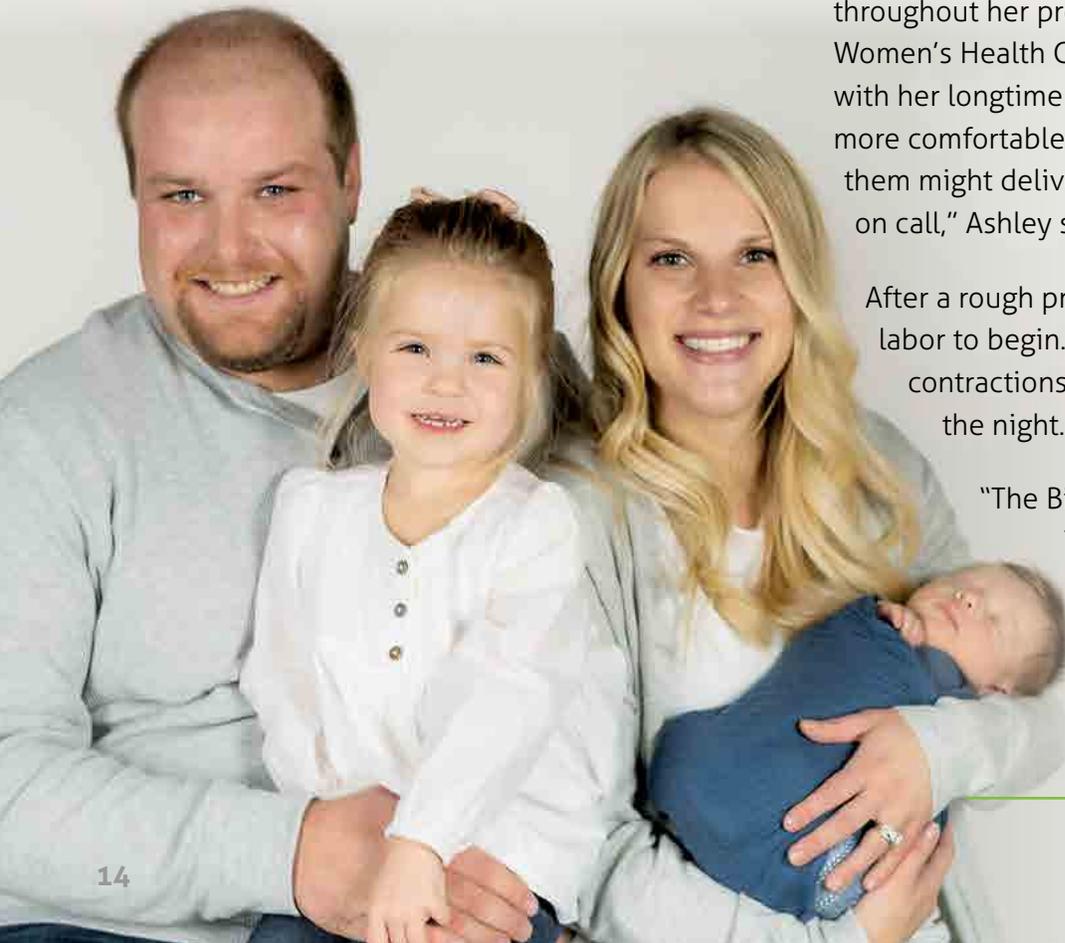
Plus, COVID precautions meant her husband Scott stayed the whole time...and no visitors were allowed. That let them both focus on bonding with their baby. “He couldn’t leave the hospital to go do 3:00 am chores” on their dairy farm in Randolph. “It was great – he was stuck there with me,” Ashley laughs.

COVID precautions improved Ashley’s experience, starting with prenatal care. The OB/GYNs rotated throughout her prenatal appointments at the Women’s Health Center, rather than all appointments with her longtime doctor Deb Suppes, MD. “I felt more comfortable meeting them all, since any one of them might deliver the baby, depending on who was on call,” Ashley says. (By luck, it was Dr. Suppes.)

After a rough pregnancy, Ashley was eager for labor to begin. After a few false starts, her contractions intensified – in the middle of the night.

“The Birth Center staff was exceptional. They greeted us so cheerfully at

“I felt like I got time to bond with my husband and baby.”



Ashley Otte, Randolph

during a pandemic...peaceful

2:30 in the morning," Ashley recalls. "They were really supportive. We always felt we were in great hand and safe, even during a pandemic."

"We were really impressed with the level of care," including masks for Ashley and Scott when staff were with them. "They told us, 'You won't regret being overly cautious, but you would regret it if something happened.'"

When Levi was born, "he sat on my chest for an hour, and nursed," Ashley said. "I felt like I got time to bond with my husband and baby rather than feeling like I had to pass him around to our family and friends. I felt much less stressed this time, with no visitors."

They weren't completely alone, though. Their window looked out towards the Long Term Care Center. "This older lady across the way waved to us. We were having breakfast, and she waved and we waved back. It was the sweetest thing."

They didn't feel alone heading home, either. "When you leave the hospital, you have an entire medical team at the Birth Center whenever you need them. It's such a good feeling knowing if I ever have a question or problem, they are a just a phone call away."

Ashley's advice for other new parents? "It's far less stressful than I thought it would be with COVID precautions. I dreaded that it wouldn't be special like when our first baby Lucy was born – but it was. We followed our gut, and did what's right for our family."

MORE BABIES, MORE OPTIONS... MORE NEW SPACES

The Birth Center expansion continues with even more fresh, new spaces – and more birth options – to welcome babies in our nurturing, family-centered environment.

We added a dedicated operating room for Cesarean sections (and twins!), plus a bright new nursery. Most babies will stay in the room with the family, but there are times when you may need to have your new little one in the nursery. Our new nursery features a colorful, open design, with recliners and rocking chairs for parents to spend time with their babies there.

Families are loving the spaces we added last fall: our first-ever Water Birth Suite, new labor & delivery rooms, and new post-partum rooms. We designed it all with feedback from new moms including thoughtful touches like soaking tubs for hydrotherapy, huge windows with calming nature views, baby bath sinks, in-room fridge for your own food and beverages, and room-darkening blinds.

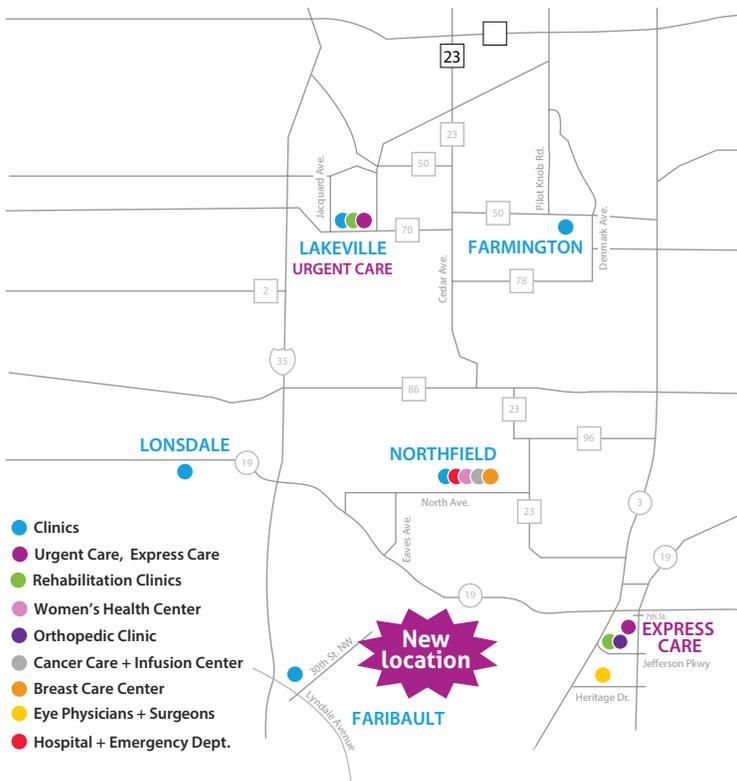
Still to come this year: Remodeling of current patient rooms, and a new larger, more comfortable waiting room.



See photos and details:
<http://bit.ly/nhc-birth-center-expansion>

2000 North Avenue
Northfield, MN 55057

Clinics, Hospital + Specialty Care close to you



Hospital + Emergency

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

Clinics + Urgent Care

Faribault Clinic
1980 30th St. NW (at Lyndale Ave.), Tel: 507-334-1601

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
(temporarily closed)
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

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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