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Paul Gilbertson revived his liver...and his life

Heavy drinking caused liver failure so advanced that Paul Gilbertson was given three to six months to live.

He was 47 years old.

"I had to make a decision really quick: Live, or die?" Paul says. "I made the decision to live. I quit drinking."

In a healthy liver, blood flows from the portal vein into the liver like water from a hose into a sponge. But scarring and hardening of the vein blocks blood flow, and prevents the liver from doing its job removing excess salt from the body. Fluid builds up and can leak into the abdomen, damaging the lungs and other organs.

"It was brutal being so sick," Paul recalls. "Every day you don't want to get out of bed, you can't bend over to tie your shoes, you're exhausted all the time."

A shunt can be inserted in the damaged vein to bypass the liver. This TIPS procedure (transjugular intrahepatic portosystemic shunt) reduces blood backup and relieves pressure on the liver and other organs.

TIPS could help Paul. First, his care team needed to stop fluid buildup, so Paul could get healthy enough

to have the TIPS procedure.

Paul needed paracentesis: A needle is inserted in the belly to drain off the fluid. NH+C's Endoscopy team does this procedure in the Surgery Center at Northfield Hospital.

But first, Paul had to stop drinking.

Surgeon Ashley Marek, MD convinced him. "She said, 'This is what you what you need to do. And we'll get through it together.' **She was instrumental in saving my life.**"

"She's a rock star," Paul says. "She's very confident in what she's doing, and very reassuring."

Paul had paracentesis every week for a year. The Endoscopy team drained about 17 pounds of fluid from his body every week. "I'd go from size 50 pants to size 32," Paul says. "I actually looked forward to getting drained every week."

His care team was "very encouraging and helpful. They made it a lot easier in a bad situation," Paul says. He credits Stephanie Marshall, RN Clinic Coordinator, nurse Jackie Malecha, RN and the Endoscopy staff with a natural kindness: "You can see it in their work and how they live their life and how they treat their

“Dr. Marek is very confident in what she’s doing, and very reassuring.”

Paul Gilbertson, Northfield

patients,” Paul says. “They knew I was in pain, and some people are matter-of-fact about pain because they see it every day. Instead, [this staff was very caring, and wanted to help.](#)”

Paul’s final session was in August 2021. He had the TIPS procedure at the University of Minnesota, and has stayed healthy ever since.

“It changed my life,” Paul says. “I’m so glad it’s over. I couldn’t have done it without those gals. Dr. Marek and Stephanie were my biggest cheerleaders.”

Paul’s a grandpa now, eating healthy and doing Pilates and yoga five times a week. He’s happy with his second chance at life.

“The Bible says, ‘You reap what you sow,’ but first you must sow,” Paul says. “I have a tattoo on my arm that says, ‘Truly Blessed.’ I was blessed to pull out of it.”

Paul’s advice for others: “Don’t wait until it’s too late. Fortunately for me, it wasn’t too late – but it was very close. Thank goodness I was able to make my own decisions on saving my own life.”

With a good team at his side.



Davis Bailey stayed in play

Davis Bailey's weekend took a short detour.

The four-year-old had symptoms of a possible infection. The good news: It didn't seem that bad. The bad news: It was Sunday.

Rather than wait until Monday, Davis' mom Erin took him to Urgent Care Northfield.

"It wasn't a huge issue, so we didn't want to go to the Emergency Department," Erin says. "But we did want to have it looked at before Monday, for the comfort of having some answers, and for ease of life to know if we could keep our regular schedule for Monday."

When Erin and Davis arrived at 9:00 a.m., they were third in line as Urgent Care opened. (Urgent Care is triage-based care. Patients are seen based on urgency of symptoms, not in order of arrival.)

"The nurse was efficient and super friendly with Davis – she had good rapport with a 4-year-old who didn't want to be there," Erin laughs.

Provider Sheena Buchholtz, APRN, FNP-C asked "a lot of good questions about the situation and past experiences to get up to speed on his medical history," Erin says. "I was impressed by the level of questions she asked. And she was willing to answer all the questions we had, even things not related to the main reason we came in," like that little cough Davis had.

A physical exam and a quick lab test gave Erin the

answers she wanted. Davis got a sticker, then some ice cream at home, and got on with his day feeling fine about his detour to the clinic.

"It was such a relief to have answers, to be able to take care of it so easily, and get back to our weekend," Erin says.

Follow up was smooth, too – in both directions: "They made it clear that they'd follow up with full lab results, and also made me comfortable that we could call or come in on Monday if Davis wasn't feeling better by then." (He was.)

"It's so great to have an option when your primary clinic isn't open," Erin says. "For things that don't need the Emergency Department – an ear infection, or strep throat – it's great to be able to get test results and treatment and move on with your day."

Urgent Care is a much better option for less-serious conditions. "It's not helpful to rely on the Emergency Department for those kinds of needs, because it bogs down the healthcare system," Erin says. "I don't want to be sitting in the ED when someone who really needs that level of help comes in."

Erin's advice about Urgent Care: "If you need it, use it. Urgent Care provides peace of mind in those off-hours. It gives you the reassurance that you've found some answers."

And keeps the whole family on track.

> Urgent Care Northfield

2014 Jefferson Rd. (Hwy. 3)
(507) 646-6700

> Urgent Care Lakeville

9974 214th St. West
(952) 469-0500





11 questions to ask your doctor

Your annual checkup is a time for your provider to gather a lot of information about your health.

It's a good time for you to get information too, on steps to take now, and in the year ahead.

Family medicine physician David McIntyre, MD suggests 11 key questions:



David McIntyre, MD

1 How are my blood pressure and heart rate? "The nurse will take your vitals while rooming you. Ask then: 'Are they within normal range? Do we need to talk about them if they're not?'"

2 What's a good target for my weight? "Ask your provider if you're at a good weight for your height, age, medical conditions, and other factors. Would you benefit from dropping or gaining a few pounds, or maybe more?"

3 Are my medications and doses right for me? "It's useful to review all your medications at the same time to prevent interactions and monitor side effects. You want your primary care provider to have a full picture of all your medications – especially if some prescriptions are from other doctors, specialists who focus on one aspect of your medical care."

4 Are these over-the-counter medications and herbal supplements OK for me? "Bring a complete list of all OTC and supplements you're

taking. Ask: Any concern about these substances? About the amounts? Taking one Vitamin C pill is helpful but taking 10 may be harmful. For the most part, less is often better. And, some substances advertised as 'miracle cures' can actually be harmful."

5 Am I up to date on all my immunizations?

"Children's appointments focus well on immunizations; adults should ask about age-appropriate immunizations, too. Flu shot annually, tetanus every 10 years, shingles vaccine starting at age 50, pneumonia vaccine starting at age 65, and of course COVID vaccination for everyone medically eligible. If you have a record of your immunizations, bring it in. That's helpful if you're a new patient to the clinic, especially if you're coming from another state."

6 Am I up to date on age-appropriate cancer screenings? "Breast cancer screening begins at age 40, colon screening at age 45, prostate at age 50. There are exceptions based on family history and your health history – it may be right to start younger, or screen more frequently. Ask about it."

7 What lab tests do I need, and what information do they give you? "Routine lab work, like cholesterol and diabetes screening, shows your doctor any areas of concern so we can treat it early. We treat high cholesterol to lower your risk of heart attack, stroke, cardiovascular disease. With diabetes, we want to manage it early to prevent damage to your eyes, kidneys, nervous system. We screen for anemia, and check liver and kidney function. Based on lab

ctor at your annual checkup

test results, your doctor may talk with you about diet, exercise, possibly medication.”

8 **What’s this weird thing on my skin?** “If you have any spots you’re not sure about or are changing, bring it up. If it’s not easily visible, point it out.”

9 **Here’s what’s new in my family history.** “If your dad has had a heart attack, or your sister was diagnosed with breast cancer since your last checkup, tell us. That might adjust when and how we screen your health. Conditions with strong hereditary links include breast and colon cancer, Type 2 diabetes, and vascular disease (heart attack, high cholesterol, high blood pressure). If something has changed in your parents’ or siblings’ health, that’s important information for your health.”

10 **How are my health habits?** “These important, everyday habits are the basis of good health. Are you getting enough sleep? Enough exercise? Is your diet right for you? How’s your intake of caffeine and alcohol? Moderation is the key: Two glasses of wine a day doesn’t concern me as much as 14 on Saturday. Be honest with your doctor. For habits that you know that aren’t good for your health (like smoking), ask for help on how to stop.”

11 **Can we talk about anxiety and depression?** “Yes, we can – and should. Stress, insomnia, anxiety, depression are the things that people are shy to bring up, but they’re often what leads to other health conditions and chemical use. If you’re feeling anxious all the time or feeling withdrawn, bring it up. Your provider can help facilitate counseling

or therapy; other options include support groups, changes to diet and exercise, and medication. Often, it’s a combination of treatments that works.”

“Having a candid discussion with your provider gets you on the same page about your health, and about the concerns that matter most to you,” Dr. McIntyre says. “If you’re depressed and can’t get out of bed, let’s focus on that and not on the fact that your blood pressure is high. We want to work together to do what’s best for you.”

Dr. McIntyre sees patients in the Faribault and Northfield clinics.

- > **Appointments in Faribault:** (507) 334-1601
- > **Appointments in Northfield:** (507) 646-1494





11 preguntas que debe hacer a

Su revisión anual es un momento en el que su proveedor reúne mucha información sobre su salud.

También es un buen momento para informarse sobre los pasos que hay que dar ahora y en el próximo año.



David McIntyre, MD

El médico de medicina familiar, David McIntyre, sugiere 11 preguntas clave:

1 ¿Cómo está mi presión arterial y mi ritmo cardíaco? “La enfermera le tomará los signos vitales mientras lo recibe. Entonces, pregunte: ‘¿Están dentro del rango normal? ¿Tenemos que hablar de ellos si no lo están?’”

2 ¿Cuál es un buen objetivo para mi peso? “Pregunte a su proveedor si está en un buen peso para su altura, edad, afecciones médicas y otros factores. ¿Le beneficiaría bajar o subir unas libras, o tal vez más?”

3 ¿Los medicamentos y las dosis son adecuados para mí? “Es útil revisar todos los medicamentos al mismo tiempo para evitar interacciones y controlar los efectos secundarios. Usted quiere que su proveedor de atención primaria tenga una visión completa de todos sus medicamentos, especialmente si algunas recetas son de otros médicos, especialistas que se centran en un aspecto de su atención médica”.

4 ¿Me convienen estos medicamentos de venta libre y suplementos de hierbas? “Traiga una lista completa de todos los medicamentos de venta libre y suplementos que esté tomando. Pregunte: ¿Alguna preocupación por estas sustancias? ¿Acerca de las cantidades? Tomar una pastilla de vitamina C es útil, pero tomar 10 puede ser perjudicial. En la mayoría de los casos, menos es mejor. Además, algunas sustancias que se anuncian como ‘curas milagrosas’ pueden ser realmente perjudiciales”.

5 ¿Estoy al día con todas mis vacunas? “Las citas de los niños se centran bastante en las vacunas; los adultos también deben preguntar por las vacunas adecuadas a su edad. Vacuna contra la gripe anualmente, contra el tétanos cada 10 años, contra el herpes zóster a partir de los 50 años, contra la neumonía a partir de los 65 años y, por supuesto, la vacuna contra la COVID para todos los que sean médicamente elegibles. Si tiene un registro de sus vacunas, tráigalo. Es útil si es un paciente nuevo en la clínica, especialmente si viene de otro estado”.

6 ¿Estoy al día con las pruebas de detección de cáncer apropiadas para mi edad? “Las pruebas de detección de cáncer de mama comienzan a los 40 años, las de colon a los 45 y las de próstata a los 50. Hay excepciones basadas en los antecedentes familiares y en los antecedentes de salud: puede ser oportuno empezar a una edad más temprana, o realizar las pruebas con más frecuencia. Pregunte por esto”.

su médico en su revisión anual

7 ¿Qué pruebas de laboratorio necesito y qué información aportan? “Las pruebas de laboratorio rutinarias, como los análisis de colesterol y diabetes, muestran a su médico cualquier área preocupante para que podamos tratarla a tiempo. Tratamos el colesterol alto para reducir el riesgo de infarto, accidente cerebrovascular y enfermedad cardiovascular. En el caso de la diabetes, queremos controlarla a tiempo para evitar daños en los ojos, los riñones y el sistema nervioso. Hacemos pruebas de detección de anemia y comprobamos la función hepática y renal. Basándose en los resultados de las pruebas de laboratorio, su médico puede hablar con usted sobre la dieta, el ejercicio y la posibilidad de tomar medicamentos”.

8 ¿Qué es esta cosa rara en mi piel? “Si tiene alguna mancha de la que no está seguro o que está cambiando, méncionela. Si no es fácilmente visible, señálela”.

9 Estas son las novedades de mis antecedentes familiares. “Si su padre ha tenido un infarto o a su hermana le han diagnosticado cáncer de mama desde su última revisión, díganoslo. Eso podría ajustar cuándo y cómo realizamos pruebas de detección para su salud. Entre las afecciones con fuertes vínculos hereditarios figuran el cáncer de mama y de colon, la diabetes tipo 2 y las enfermedades vasculares (infarto, colesterol alto, presión arterial alta). Si algo ha cambiado en la salud de sus padres o hermanos, es una información importante para su salud”.

10 ¿Cómo son mis hábitos de salud? “Estos importantes hábitos cotidianos son la base

de la buena salud. ¿Duerme lo suficiente? ¿Realiza suficiente ejercicio? ¿Su dieta es adecuada para usted? ¿Cómo es su consumo de cafeína y alcohol? La clave es la moderación: dos vasos de vino al día no me preocupan tanto como 14 el sábado. Sea sincero con su médico. En el caso de los hábitos que sabe que no son buenos para su salud (como fumar), solicite ayuda para dejarlos”.

11 ¿Podemos hablar de la ansiedad y la depresión? “Sí, podemos, y debemos. El estrés, el insomnio, la ansiedad y la depresión son cosas que a la gente le da vergüenza sacar a relucir, pero a menudo son las que conducen a otras afecciones de salud y al consumo de sustancias químicas. Si se siente ansioso todo el tiempo o se siente retraído, háblelo. Su proveedor puede ayudar a facilitar la asesoría o la terapia; otras opciones son los grupos de apoyo, los cambios en la dieta y el ejercicio, y los medicamentos. A menudo, lo que funciona es una combinación de tratamientos”.

“Mantener una conversación sincera con su proveedor hace que estén en la misma página sobre su salud y sobre las preocupaciones que más le importan”, dice el Dr. McIntyre. “Si está deprimido y no puede levantarse de la cama, centrémonos en eso y no en el hecho de que su presión arterial es alta. Queremos trabajar juntos para hacer lo mejor para usted”.

El Dr. McIntyre atiende a los pacientes en las clínicas de Faribault y Northfield.

> Citas en Faribault: (507) 334-1601

> Citas en Northfield: (507) 646-1494



What's on your plate?

You know that good nutrition is one key to your best health.

It's critical for maintaining good health, and preventing diseases. So, what should you eat, and how much of it?

Depends on who you are.

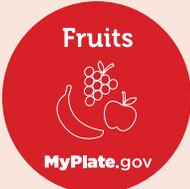
USDA's "MyPlate" is a handy guide to fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy – with recommendations on daily servings of each.

Now, MyPlate lets you customize your own plate to suit your age, gender, and activity level.

You can calculate your own plate at myplate.gov/myplate-plan, and get a list of foods and portion sizes tailored to your best nutrition. Talk with your health care provider about an eating pattern and physical activity program that is right for you.

Because you are what you eat, and what you eat... depends on who you are.

Food Group Amounts for 2,000 Calories a Day for Ages 14+ Years

 <p>2 Cups Focus on whole fruits Focus on whole fruits that are fresh, frozen, canned or dried</p>	 <p>2½ Cups Vary your veggies Choose a variety of colorful fresh, frozen and canned vegetables – make sure to include dark green, red and orange choices.</p>	 <p>6 ounces Make half your grains whole grains Find whole-grain foods by reading the Nutrition Facts label and ingredients list.</p>	 <p>5½ ounces Vary your protein routine Mix up your protein foods to include seafood, beans, peas and lentils; unsalted nuts and seeds; soy products; eggs; and lean meats and poultry.</p>	 <p>3 Cups Move to low-fat or fat-free dairy milk or yogurt for lactose-free dairy or fortified soy versions Look for ways to include dairy or fortified soy alternatives at meal and snacks throughout the day.</p>
 <p>Choose foods and beverages with less added sugars, saturated fat and sodium Limit: • Added sugars to <50 grams a day • Saturated fat to <22 grams a day • Sodium to <2,300 milligrams a day</p>		 <p>Be active your way: Children 6 to 17 years old should move 60 minutes every day. Adults should be physically active at least 2½ hours per week.</p>		

A FRESH TAKE ON HOSPITAL FOOD

When you're in a hospital bed, "food becomes medicine," says NH+C's Executive Chef Molly Lindberg. "Patients are here to get better. We give them the freshest, best product we can, to nurture their health. It's food with purpose."

Hospitals get a bad rap for their food. Big hospitals manage high volumes by limiting menu options and following fixed schedules. Northfield Hospital's size makes it possible to provide concierge service: patients order from a fairly wide menu, at any time they choose, and the meal is made to order, with fresh (never frozen) ingredients.

"One patient said we serve the best meatloaf they've ever had, and they'd come back to the hospital just for that," says Ashley Mendel, director of Culinary Services at Northfield Hospital.

Produce is delivered five times a week for the freshest ingredients. "We choose produce that's in season, and we look at trends in ingredients, flavors, and styles of cooking" to create menus that are tasty and healthy, Molly says. It's all cooked from scratch, and assembled to order.

Ashley and Molly are both graduates of Le Cordon Bleu; Molly holds degrees in Dietetics and Public Health, and has cooked for healthcare and event sites across the Twin Cities (including her own ballroom). Ashley was a chef for the Minnesota Vikings, feeding players, stadium staff and VIP visitors every game day.

Ashley and Molly both connected food to health early in their lives.

"My dad had cancer, and that's when I got into healthy foods, cooking for him," Ashley says. "He always joked when I was in culinary school that he was throwing up from chemo, not from my food. But we knew it was 50/50," she laughs.

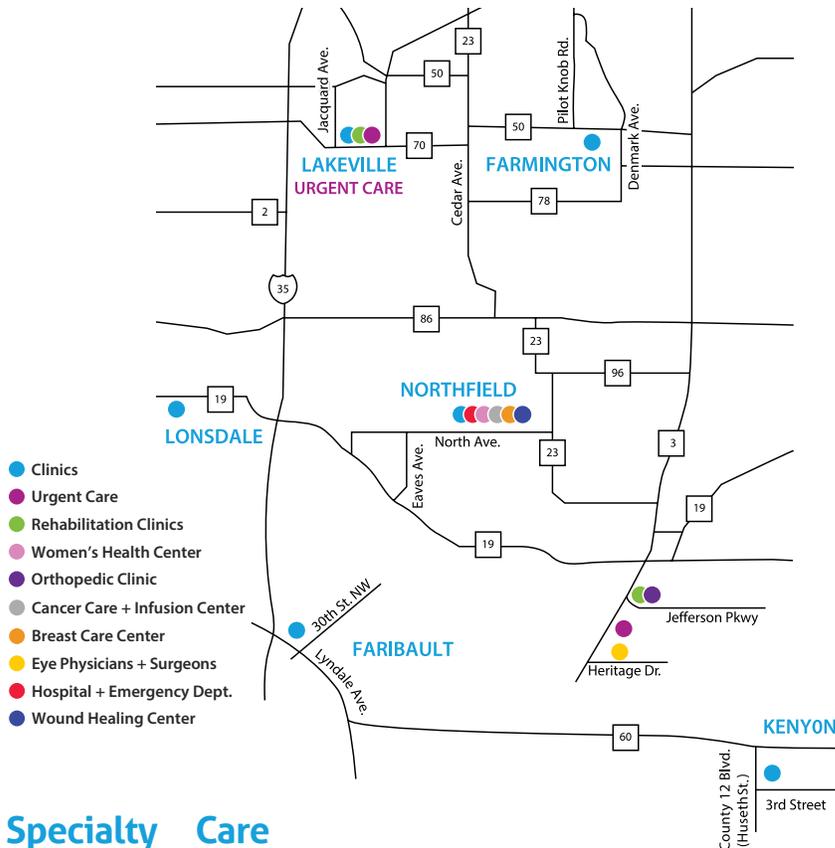
Molly was young when her mom had heart surgery, and grew tired of all the hot dish that friends brought during her mom's recovery. "I called it 'mixed food,' and I didn't like it," Molly recalls. These days, she opts for layers of flavor, in the popular salads, entrees and soups she serves at NH+C.

"I've always been curious about how food works in our bodies, and why we feel different depending on what we eat," Molly says. "You don't build a foundation with shoddy materials; why would you build your body with anything but the best?"



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Orthopedics Clinic – Northfield
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Rehabilitation Clinics
Northfield: 1381 Jefferson Road
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Lakeville: 9913 – 214th Street West
Tel: 952-985-2020

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WE'RE ONLINE

