

your health matters

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Norwalk Hospital Ranked in
Top 5% for Clinical
Excellence

Explore Your Genes:
Create a Family Health History

Advanced Help for
Heart Failure Available



Compassion. Expertise. Results.

Norwalk Hospital Again Ranked in Top 5% Nationally for Clinical Excellence



Norwalk Hospital received its second consecutive HealthGrades Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence. Left to right are ICU/CCU Patient Care Manager Denise White, RN, CCRN; Clinical Pharmacy Specialist Ted Kowalczyk, PharmD; Lead Respiratory Therapist Linda Bliet, RRT; Pulmonary/Critical Care Medical Director Stephen Winter, MD; ICU/CCU Staff Nurse Shybi Mathew, RN, CCRN; and Surgical Physician Assistant Brad Ledzian, PA.

For the second year in a row, Norwalk Hospital is ranked among the top five percent of hospitals in the nation for overall clinical excellence, receiving the prestigious HealthGrades Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence 2011.

As a leading health care rating organization, HealthGrades gives the Distinguished Hospital Award to hospitals that have statistically significant lower risk-adjusted mortality and in-hospital complications than all other hospitals.

Norwalk Hospital is the only hospital in Fairfield County, and one of just 268 in the nation, to earn this prestigious award.

HealthGrades also ranked Norwalk Hospital the:

- Number one hospital in Connecticut for stroke care
- Number two hospital in Connecticut for vascular surgery and prostate surgery
- Number three hospital in Connecticut for orthopedic services and gastroenterology medical treatments

“These awards place Norwalk Hospital among the leading hospitals in the United States for clinical excellence and are proof, yet again, of the sophisticated, safe, top-quality care that patients receive at Norwalk Hospital,” said Hospital President and CEO Dan DeBarba.

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—Hospital President and CEO Dan DeBarba

Five-Star Ratings Given to Hospital Services

In addition to earning the Distinguished Hospital Award for Clinical Excellence 2011, Norwalk Hospital received 10 five-star ratings from HealthGrades, which places the Hospital in the top 15 percent of hospitals nationally for clinical excellence in the following areas:

- Heart attack treatment
- Pulmonary embolism treatment
- Sepsis treatment
- Gastrointestinal bleeding treatment
- Bowel obstruction treatment
- Hip fracture repair
- Pneumonia treatment
- Stroke treatment
- Prostate surgery
- Peripheral vascular bypass surgery

Heart Failure: Advanced, Effective Help Available

Congestive heart failure, or CHF, is a serious health problem. It occurs when the heart can't pump enough blood to the lungs and the rest of the body. More than 4.8 million Americans suffer from the condition, with approximately 400,000 new cases diagnosed each year.

If not properly controlled, CHF can lead to excessive fatigue, chronic coughing and wheezing, shortness of breath, swelling of the feet, hands, legs, ankles, or abdomen and—in severe cases—death. Norwalk Hospital's multidisciplinary congestive heart failure team, however, helps CHF patients live fully and actively, said interventional cardiologist and heart failure expert Robert Jumper, MD, a member of the Norwalk Hospital Medical Staff.

"Medical advances over the past three years have made it possible for us to effectively treat patients with even the most severe symptoms," Dr. Jumper said. "There's no reason for anyone to suffer. Congestive heart failure treatment is one of the fastest-growing fields in cardiology."

Traditional treatments include medication, regular exercise, a diet low in fat and salt, avoiding alcohol, and not smoking. Surgical options may include valve replacement or the implantation of a bat-

Norwalk Hospital's multidisciplinary congestive heart failure team helps patients live fully and actively.

tery-operated left ventricular assist device (LVAD) that helps the heart pump blood.

While at one time LVADs were fairly large and cumbersome and placed partially outside the body, they are now the size of a thumb and are fully implantable, Dr. Jumper said.

"The device is implanted through a small port in the chest and connected to a battery pack no larger than a beeper that the patient wears around the waist," he explained. "We've seen patients who've suffered severe physical declines have

these devices implanted and be back gardening, walking, and doing all the other things they've always enjoyed. It's amazing.

"And it comes from being treated at a hospital like Norwalk Hospital, which offers not just a team approach to care, but access to the most advanced treatment options available."

» To find a cardiologist on staff at Norwalk Hospital, call 1-866-NHB-WELL or log on to www.norwalkhospital.org.



ADVANCED IMPLANT ALLOWS SENIOR TO 'ENJOY LIFE'

Frank Pironto's heart had failed so badly that by last November, it was only working at 20 percent efficiency.

"Here's when I knew I was in trouble: My wife Rosalie and I went on a cruise to the Caribbean, and I couldn't walk up the gangplank. I couldn't breathe. I couldn't do anything. For 11 days, all I wanted to do was sit or sleep," said Mr. Pironto, 77, of Norwalk.

Up until this point, Mr. Pironto and his physicians were able to keep his congestive heart failure under control with medications and lifestyle choices. A pacemaker implanted in 2009 corrected the arrhythmia he also experienced. But despite the best efforts to manage these conditions and Mr. Pironto's high blood pressure, more

sophisticated care was needed.

That's when he was referred to heart failure expert Robert Jumper, MD. Dr. Jumper recommended Mr. Pironto have a left ventricular assist device (LVAD) implanted. Once primarily used to "bridge" a patient until a heart transplant could be performed, the device is now being used as a long-term solution for some patients with severe or end-stage heart failure, Dr. Jumper said. (Read more about the device in the story above.)

"Before the implant, all I wanted to do was go back to bed. Now, I have the strength I need to enjoy my kids and life."

"Before the implant, all I wanted to do was go back to bed," Mr. Pironto said. "Now, I can take walks on the beach, go shopping and out to dinner with my wife. I have the strength I need to enjoy my kids and life."

Norwalk Hospital Is a Leader in Colorectal Cancer Screening

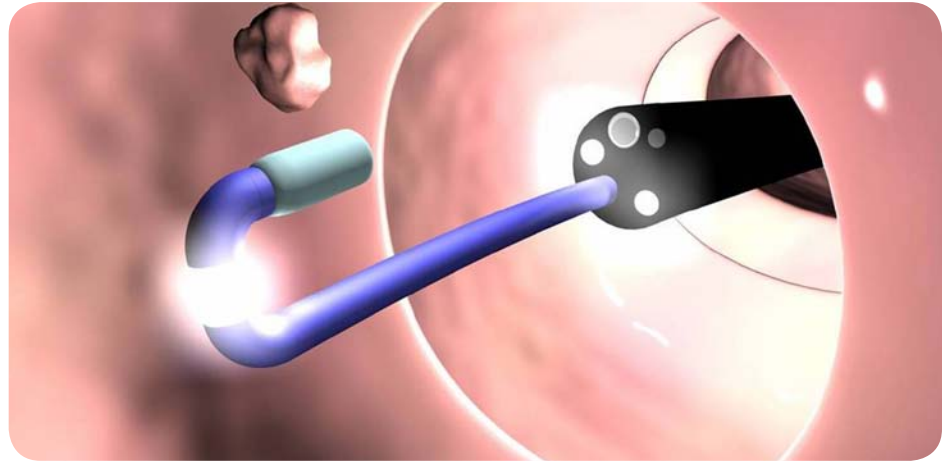
Advanced detection tool available only at Hospital Center for Digestive Diseases

A new, sophisticated screening tool called the Third Eye Retroscope can improve colorectal cancer detection rates by as much as 25 percent, experts say. Norwalk Hospital is the only Connecticut hospital to offer this state-of-the-art—and potentially life-saving—technology, which is used in conjunction with standard colonoscopy.

What makes the Third Eye Retroscope so effective is its ability to provide a retrograde, or backward, view of the colon. This allows physicians to examine blind spots and find potentially precancerous polyps—called adenomas—hidden behind folds. These polyps can be missed during a traditional colonoscopy, said Hospital gastroenterologist Seth A. Gross, MD, director of advanced endoscopy.

Although considered the gold standard in colorectal cancer detection, colonoscopy alone can miss as many as 12 to 24 percent of adenomas, studies show.

“Third Eye acts like a rear-view mirror, giving physicians a more complete view,” Dr. Gross said. “During colonoscopy, we do our best to smooth out and examine all areas of the colon, but it can be challenging because of the curves and folds. Third Eye Retroscope overcomes that, making it a powerful tool



in the fight against colorectal cancer.”

The third most common type of cancer in the United States, colorectal cancer is almost always curable if diagnosed and treated early. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that up to 60 percent of colorectal cancer deaths could be prevented if everyone ages 50 or older had regular colorectal cancer screenings.

“A colonoscopy is nothing to fear and can help physicians locate and remove adenomas before they may become cancerous,” said Brian J. Schwender, MD, a gastroenterologist on staff at Norwalk

Hospital and who has an office at Norwalk Medical Group. “The Third Eye Retroscope technology is a significant advancement in colorectal cancer detection and prevention and is only available at Norwalk Hospital.”

» If you are older than age 50 or at high risk for colorectal cancers, talk with your physician about a colonoscopy and the Third Eye Retroscope. To find a gastroenterologist on staff at Norwalk Hospital, call 1-866-NHB-WELL or log on to www.norwalkhospital.org.

WHO NEEDS TO BE SCREENED FOR COLORECTAL CANCER?

Getting a colonoscopy every five years, starting at age 50, is the general recommendation to help prevent colorectal cancer, or detect it in its earliest stages. Those at high risk may need to be screened earlier or more often. Talk with your doctor about what’s best for you. High-risk factors include:

- A personal or family history of polyps or colon cancer
- Being African American
- Inflammatory intestinal conditions such as ulcerative colitis and Crohn’s disease
- Having diabetes or being obese
- Regularly eating a diet low in fiber and high in fat
- Being a smoker or heavy drinker



Osteoarthritis: The Most Common Cause of Chronic Knee Pain

As many as 20 percent of all adults suffer from regular or recurring knee pain. While for some the pain stems from an injury, such as a bruised ligament or torn meniscus, for the majority it's caused by osteoarthritis—a degenerative joint disease that affects more than 20 million Americans.

The most common form of arthritis, osteoarthritis is characterized by the breakdown and eventual loss of cartilage, which cushions the joint and keeps bones from rubbing together. Signs that cartilage may have worn away include:

- Pain standing or walking short distances, climbing up or down stairs, or getting in and out of chairs
- Pain with activity
- Pain or stiffness in movements performed while sitting
- Joint stiffness after getting out of bed
- Knee swelling in one or more areas
- A grating sensation in the knee during use

But whether you experience some or all of these symptoms, it's important to talk with your doctor, said Nicholas V. Polifroni, MD, Norwalk Hospital's section chief of orthopedics, who also has an office with Coastal Orthopaedics. "Only then will you receive an

informed diagnosis and treatment," he said.

These treatments may include prescription or nonprescription medications, physical therapy or home therapies such as icing, resting or exercising your knee. More serious pain may require that pain or anti-inflammatory medication be injected directly into the knee. Some doctors also recommend injections of hyaluronic acid, to replenish joint fluid that is lost due to osteoarthritis.

Severe osteoarthritis and some knee injuries may require arthroscopic (minimally invasive) surgery to evaluate or repair the damaged area, or osteotomy surgery to reshape the knee to avoid rubbing. An extremely worn knee may require total joint replacement.

"Although most people don't realize it, low-impact exercise is one of the best things you can do to alleviate osteoarthritis knee pain," Dr. Polifroni said. "Avoid exercises with deep knee bending. But functional, knee-friendly exercises like walking, biking or low-impact aerobics can help strengthen and protect the knee by improving motion, strength, and muscular endurance."



Ask the Doctor: Orthopedic Surgeon Nicholas V. Polifroni, MD



Nicholas V. Polifroni, MD

Q. I have osteoarthritis and suffer from terrible knee pain. How do I know if I need a knee replacement?

Dr. Polifroni, Norwalk Hospital orthopedics section chief, said knee replacement patients are typically older than 55, have advanced osteoarthritis, have suffered significant joint damage and are limited by pain from performing simple, everyday activities like walking or climbing stairs.

"If nonprescription pain medications, injections, using a cane, or other doctor-recommended medical treatments aren't sufficiently helping, it may be time to talk with your doctor about surgical options, including knee replacement. It's a big decision. Although the procedure itself takes only about 90 minutes, recovery requires intense rehabilitation.

"The therapy is hard work, but the payoff in improved quality of life is huge. Most patients before surgery can't shop, walk around the block, sit through a movie, garden, golf, or do many other things they enjoy. After surgery, however, they can do

pretty much everything. Older patients also generally see improvements in balance and have a reduced risk of falling.

"Statistics from the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons show that first-time knee replacement surgeries are up 63 percent in the United States. Aside from improved quality of life, patients are attracted by the fact that the replacement components available today are stronger, more durable, and last longer than any available before. Advances in surgery have also made partial replacements possible.

"But again, the best option for any patient considering knee replacement is to find a qualified surgeon and to have an educated, detailed discussion."

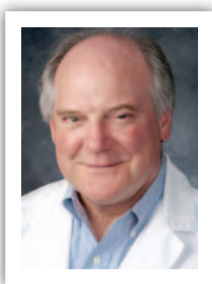
» To find an orthopedic surgeon on staff at Norwalk Hospital, call 1-866-NHB-WELL (642-9355) or visit www.norwalkhospital.org.

Norwalk Hospital Liver Center on Leading Edge

When the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, as expected, approves two new, breakthrough drugs this summer to treat hepatitis C, Norwalk Hospital will be one of the first hospitals in the region to offer them, said Gastroenterology Section Chief and Liver Center Co-Director William Hale, MD.

Norwalk Hospital has the only dedicated Liver Center in southern Fairfield County, as well as specialist physicians experienced in effectively treating complicated, chronic liver conditions like hepatitis C, hepatitis B, fatty liver disease, cirrhosis and liver cancer, Dr. Hale added.

The new hepatitis C drugs—Vertex Pharmaceuticals' Telaprevir and Merck's Boceprevir—could nearly double the chance of curing those with hepatitis C, studies show. Not properly treated, the virus can destroy the liver and lead to the need for a liver transplant.



Norwalk Hospital Liver Center Co-Director William Hale, MD.

needed to effectively treat serious liver conditions.”

Part of the Hospital's Center for Digestive Diseases signature services, the Liver Center offers access to academic medical center-level care in a convenient community hospital setting, Dr. Hale said. Linked to the Yale School of Medicine Liver Center and Yale-New

“We're at the dawn of a new era in hepatitis C treatment, and Norwalk Hospital's Liver Center is at the forefront,” Dr. Hale said. “The center's affiliated physicians have the background and expertise

Haven Hospital Transplantation Center, the center provides easy access to a comprehensive, multidisciplinary team of hepatologists, gastroenterologists, radiologists, nutritionists, hepato-pancreatic-biliary surgeons and liver transplant surgeons, all of whom work closely together.

The Norwalk Hospital-Yale affiliation gives patients access to both leading physicians, and the latest clinical trials. “Because liver disease can be so complicated, many people assume they need to travel to New York or Boston for the best treatment. But advanced-level care is available right here at Norwalk Hospital,” Dr. Hale said.

Patients are seen by appointment on Mondays. A physician referral is not required.

» To make an appointment or to learn more about the Norwalk Hospital Liver Center, call 203-852-2278.

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE

If you have diabetes or high blood pressure, you could also be at risk for kidney disease. Health experts say at least two-thirds of the 20 million chronic kidney disease cases in the United States were caused by diabetes or high blood pressure, conditions that can damage blood vessels.

Kidney disease develops when blood vessels in the kidneys lose their ability to efficiently remove waste, said Paul Wiener, MD, Norwalk Hospital's section chief of nephrology. This, in turn, causes the body to store extra fluids and waste products, leading to weight gain, swollen ankles and the accumulation of damaging toxins.

Often, kidney disease has no symptoms in the early stages. Left to progress undiagnosed and untreated, however, the kidneys may eventually fail, leading to the need for dialysis or a kidney transplant. Essential to preventing this is high blood pressure and diabetes management, Dr. Wiener said.

“When kidney disease develops from high blood pressure, so does a dangerous cycle, as extra fluid in the blood vessels may cause blood pressure to rise even more,” Dr. Wiener said. “But the good news is that if it's discovered early, there are several ways to slow and treat kidney disease before it gets out of hand.”

These include effectively managing diabetes; keeping blood pressure to 130/80 or lower; eating a low-protein diet; and seeing your doctor for regular exams.



“If you have diabetes or high blood pressure, follow your treatment program closely. It can help to prevent chronic kidney disease later on,” Dr. Wiener added.

» To find a nephrologist on staff at Norwalk Hospital, call 1-866-NHB-WELL or visit www.norwalkhospital.org. The Hospital also offers an Outpatient Diabetes Self-Management Education Program. To learn more or to contact a certified diabetes educator, call 203-852-2181.

NORWALK HOSPITAL PROGRAMS



☎ To learn more or to register for a program, please call 1-866-NHB-WELL (642-9355) or the number provided. All programs are free and take place at Norwalk Hospital, 34 Maple St., Norwalk, unless otherwise noted. For a complete list of programs and events, visit our website at www.norwalkhospital.org.

HEALTH LECTURE

“Protecting Your Memory,” presented by Amy Knorr, MD, PhD, a neurologist on the Norwalk Hospital Medical Staff.

Wednesday, June 8, 6 pm, The Greens at Cannondale, 435 Danbury Road, Wilton.

WEIGHT CONTROL

Bariatric Surgery Seminars

Free, informational seminars for those considering gastric bypass or gastric banding surgery, where members of Norwalk Hospital's nationally accredited Surgical Weight Loss Center present an overview of the procedures and program. To register or receive more information, call 203-852-3100 or visit www.goodbyeBMI.org. Upcoming dates include:

- **Tuesday, June 7, 5:45 pm, Richard S. Perkin Auditorium, Norwalk Hospital**
- **Wednesday, June 8, 5:45 pm, Stamford Italian Center, 1620 Newfield Ave., Stamford**
- **Saturday, June 18, 9:15 am, Richard S. Perkin Auditorium, Norwalk Hospital**
- **Tuesday, July 5, 5:45 pm, Richard S. Perkin Auditorium, Norwalk Hospital**
- **Wednesday, July 13, 5:45 pm, Stamford Italian Center, 1620 Newfield Ave., Stamford**
- **Saturday, July 16, 9:15 am, Richard S. Perkin Auditorium, Norwalk Hospital**

Transformations

An eight-week program that teaches how to become a healthier eater, smarter grocery shopper, and more avid exerciser. Led by a registered dietitian and nutrition lifestyle specialist, the program is tailored to meet each participant's needs. Sessions include

weekly weigh-ins and strategies for keeping an effective food diary. Limited to 12 participants; new sessions every two months.

Tuesdays, noon to 1 pm, or Thursdays, 5:30 to 6:30 pm. Fee: \$180. Call 203-855-3548 or email nutrition@norwalkhealth.org for the next start dates.

Kids Healthy Weight

Three-week program offers children and their parents practical, kid-friendly eating, exercise, and weight-loss strategies. A Spanish translator is available. Sponsored by the Hospital's Clinical Nutritional Services Department. New sessions begin monthly.

Tuesdays, 6 to 7 pm. Fee: \$72. Call 203-855-3548 or email nutrition@norwalkhealth.org for upcoming dates.

EXERCISE

Tai Chi

Eight weeks of gentle exercise designed to relieve stress, increase strength and flexibility, and improve balance, coordination, and circulation. Sponsored by the Hospital's Integrative Medicine Program. Led by an experienced instructor; both beginner and advanced levels are offered.

New sessions begin every two months, generally on Thursdays. Two beginner classes run for 30 minutes at 5 and 5:30 pm. One-hour advanced class starts at 6 pm. Only experienced students may enter the advanced class; instructor permission is required. Call 203-852-CALM (2256) for fee and registration details.

Yoga

Eight weeks of Svaroopa-style yoga taught by a certified yoga therapist. Sponsored

by the Hospital's Integrative Medicine Program. Designed to help participants calm their minds, still their emotions and access their “inner knowing.”

New sessions begin every two months on Tuesdays from 5 to 6 pm. Call 203-852-CALM (2256) for fee and registration details.

PARENTING AND CHILDBIRTH

Registration is required for the following programs offered by the Norwalk Hospital Childbirth Center. Call 1-866-NHB-WELL (642-9355).

Beginnings Early Pregnancy Program

Designed for women in their first trimester to learn about what to expect in pregnancy; fetal growth and development; how to manage pregnancy discomforts; and potential risks and problems.

Fourth Tuesday of each month, 7 to 9 pm.

Breast-feeding and Caring for Your Newborn

A certified lactation consultant covers the normal process of breast-feeding, care of the umbilical cord, circumcision, and bathing a new baby. Fee: \$25.

First Saturday of the month. Please call 1-866-NHB-WELL (642-9355) for times.

Prepared Childbirth Class

Includes Lamaze-style breathing, relaxation techniques, and stages of labor and delivery. Led by a certified childbirth educator. Fee: \$175.

Four Wednesdays or four Thursdays in a row, 7 to 9 pm, or one Saturday, 9 am to 4:30 pm.



Explore Your Genes: Create a Family Health History

You have your grandmother's eyes, your father's nose, and your mother's quick wit. But will you also get Aunt Linda's cancer or grandpa's heart disease?

A family health history can help you assess your risk—and take action to prevent diseases you may be prone to developing.

Families share more than last names and traditions, said Norwalk Hospital Genetic Counselor Jessica Lipschutz, CGC. Genetics can contribute to the risk of many common diseases, including heart disease; high blood pressure; certain cancers—including breast and colon—diabetes and stroke.

“If a family member developed one of these diseases at a young age, you and your children may be at even higher risk,” said Lipschutz, adding that conditions like cystic fibrosis, hemophilia, sickle cell and muscular dystrophy are also often passed through generations. “Generally, people start thinking about their family health history after a relative is diagnosed with a certain disease. But putting together a family history is something you can do any time.”

A complete family health history should include three generations. Start by making a list of all your relatives. The most important people to include are immediate family, such as parents, siblings, and children.

For those whose health history you don't know, pick a relaxed and quiet time to talk about it with them. Explain what you are doing and why.

Make a list of questions beforehand so you don't miss anything, and ask:

- Their age and date of birth
- Whether they have any chronic conditions, such as heart disease

- About other serious illnesses they've had, including cancer or stroke
- The age at which they developed these conditions
- Whether they've had problems with pregnancy or childbirth
- What other family members passed away from
- Where in the world your ancestors are from
- Whether anyone in the family has had birth defects or learning disabilities

Then, write it all down. “A lot of couples put together this kind of history when they

start thinking about getting pregnant,” Lipschutz said. “That's the ideal time. But there's no wrong time to do it. If, for example, you learn as an adult that diabetes or heart disease run in your family, your doctor can help you create a plan to prevent or stay on top of it through lifestyle changes or regular screenings.

“However, before you can protect yourself against potential health problems, you need to know they exist,” Lipschutz added.

» For more information about genetic testing and counseling at Norwalk Hospital, call 203-852-3359.

“Before you can protect yourself against potential health problems, you need to know they exist.”

—Norwalk Hospital Genetic Counselor Jessica Lipschutz

