

Caring for kids and teens from

summerlin hospital

Fall 2019

Small but mighty

Weighing just under
three pounds
at birth, Alyssa is
now a thriving
5-year-old

Ask the Doctor

How to get ready for
your child's surgery

Life skills for 16-year-olds

Prep your teen for
impending adulthood



CHILDREN'S
MEDICAL CENTER

SUMMERLIN HOSPITAL

A Member of The Valley Health System™



It's been a busy year for our Children's Medical Center (CMC). In February, we dedicated our pediatric cancer unit on the sixth floor, celebrating with many community partners and the Cure 4 The Kids Foundation. We are fortunate to have arts-in-medicine partners such as Project Imagine and Busy Bee Art Studio to foster a creative spirit in the pediatric department. In fact, we'll have many pieces of our patients' artwork available for purchase at the Summerlin® Festival of Arts on October 12 and 13.

This fall, we're also hosting a financial literacy workshop in collaboration with Bank of Nevada. Understanding money and finances is a vital life skill that can help teens manage their money and plan for the future, whether it's contributing to the purchase of clothing, entertainment, transportation or post-secondary education. You can learn more about this in this issue.

On a lighter note, we continue to explore ways to enhance our patients' and families' time with us. Over the summer, we added two battery-operated mini cars to allow our young patients to drive themselves to surgery (no license required), and we were pleased to host members of the Las Vegas Aviators® baseball team. We are very fortunate that many athletes and entertainers choose to brighten our patients' lives despite their own busy schedules.

Wishing you a great school year ahead – stay healthy and have fun!

Robert Freymuller
CEO/Managing Director

PS – If you would like to receive future magazines via e-newsletter twice a year, please sign up at summerlinhospital.com/caringforkids.



Telling their story ... **one bead at a time**

Children's Medical Center launches Beads of Courage® program

Beads of Courage is a program that helps children who are coping with serious illness record, tell and own their stories. Colorful beads are given to young patients following tests, procedures and other treatment-related milestones. The beads help provide them with a language to communicate with others about their treatment and collected beads can form a meaningful narrative of their journey. Beads of Courage, Inc. was founded in 2005 and partners with over 300 hospitals nationally and internationally.

To learn more visit beadsofcourage.org.

Beads of Courage is grateful for the sponsorship by the Vegas Knights Foundation and partnership in caring with Maureen's Hope Foundation.



FOOD for thought

Instilling healthy eating habits in your kids



From that very first spoonful of food, keeping your little ones nourished and thriving involves daily decisions (and occasional battles) about what to eat and what not to eat. To help guide you through the early years, here are tips based on recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

FIRST FOODS. When your baby is ready to eat solid food, introduce one new food at a time for three to five days, and offer just a spoonful or two of it so your baby can get used to it and you can make sure there are no allergies. Offer a variety of flavors, textures and colors, and be patient. It can take up to 10-15 tries for a new food to click!

SNACK TIME! During those early years, consider nutritious options like yogurt, slices of ripe banana or chopped avocado. Limit snacking to two to three times a day so your child is still hungry for meals. As your child grows, let him or her become more involved in choosing healthy snacks.

PICKY EATERS. Always offer one of the foods your child will eat, and keep trying to introduce new things. Consider using cookie cutters, or serving foods in fun ways (e.g., smiley faces, animal shapes). Resist using bribes like “dessert later,” which can make healthier choices more alluring.

HEALTHY HYDRATION. Sports and energy drinks are heavily marketed to children and adolescents, but in most cases, kids don’t need them – and some of these products contain substances that could be harmful to children, the AAP says. While keeping hydrated is important, water is usually best.

COOKING TOGETHER. Activities like pouring, measuring and stirring can be fun – and educational! By helping with meal prep in a safe and supervised way, kids can build their confidence, learn concepts like math, explore new cultures, and feel more involved in mealtime.

STOP WHEN FULL! Teach your kids to stop eating when they’re full, not when their plate is empty. This can help promote healthy habits that last a lifetime. ■

Need help finding a pediatrician?
Visit valleyhealthsystemlv.com/doc or call 702-388-4888.


A MENU FOR SUCCESS

- Try to eat a daily meal together as a family – even if it’s breakfast!
- Eat a variety of foods, and if you haven’t done so, try a vegetarian recipe.
- Turn off the TV and smartphones during mealtime to avoid “unconscious eating.”



Expecting THE UNEXPECTED

When Cheryl Chitupatham went into labor nearly three months early, her doctor sent her to Summerlin Hospital.



It promised to be an exciting day for Cheryl Chitupatham. At 29 weeks pregnant, she was eagerly preparing for her baby's arrival. In fact, on that hot day in June 2014, she was touring another hospital's maternity ward. The mom-to-be had felt a little funny that morning, but she chalked it up to Braxton Hicks contractions – the sometimes-uncomfortable contractions that can come and go during a pregnancy. But, while those are typically irregular, Chitupatham was starting to feel like hers were happening with alarming regularity. Maybe these weren't Braxton Hicks after all.

“The feeling just kept getting worse,” she says. “I called my doctor to see if I should get checked out while I was at the hospital.” At just 29 weeks, the doctor was concerned. “He said I should head to a hospital with a Level III NICU,” she explains. “He told me I should go to Summerlin Hospital.” ➤

Cheryl Chitupatham and daughter Alyssa share some quality mother-daughter time.

A full-term pregnancy typically lasts about 40 weeks. Labor that begins before 37 weeks is considered “preterm” or premature. Once hospital staff discovered Chitupatham was four centimeters dilated, things happened quickly. “I was completely overwhelmed,” she remembers. “One minute I was making dinner plans and the next I was admitted to the hospital.”

Two days later, on Monday, June 9, 2014, baby Alyssa entered the world weighing just two pounds, 15 ounces.

Like nearly one in 10 babies born each year in the United States, Alyssa was born prematurely. The next stop for the tiny baby was the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) – a Level III NICU that is well-suited to care for babies like Alyssa.

“I knew she was in the right place,” Chitupatham says. “But, it was tough leaving the hospital without her.” Delivering early can take an emotional toll on a new mother. During Alyssa’s nearly six-week stay in the NICU, the recovering mom came to rely on her care team for updates when she couldn’t be there herself. “The staff was absolutely great,” she says. “I knew they cared about Alyssa, not just for her. That was everything to me.”

The new mother also discovered a valuable resource in the March of Dimes®. “You feel like you’re the only one experiencing these challenges,” she explains. “It was nice to be involved in a community of people

who understood.” That kind of support can be especially important when a baby requires additional care, which can add stressors like frequent appointments and worry about reaching milestones. “Community support is so vital,” says Chitupatham. “The March of Dimes helped connect me to moms with similar stories. I learned how essential it is to take care of myself, too – physically, emotionally and mentally.”

In fact, the March of Dimes became so important to Chitupatham that she now volunteers for the organization – helping to spread awareness and raise funds. Volunteering also helps her teach the now-5-year-old Alyssa a valuable lesson in giving back.

As for Alyssa, she’s thriving. “Since bringing her home, we’ve had our share of complications regarding her health, but she is a fighter and we are truly so blessed. To me, she turned out perfect,” the proud mother beams about her lively little girl who loves dancing, singing, drawing, watching cartoons and playing outside riding her scooter, bike or roller skates. “She loves dogs, too,” her mom adds. “Especially dogs.” Puppy, Violet, is the latest addition to the family. “She and Violet are best pals who do everything together,” Chitupatham adds happily. “It’s been quite the journey already but we’re excited for all the adventures that lie ahead. I just want Alyssa to experience it all.” ■

Visit summerlinhospital.com/NICU to learn more about our NICU and additional services.



Experienced volunteer cuddler Bill Hardenberg helps soothe a new arrival while Diane Dias, RN, looks on.

Volunteer cuddlers COMFORT TINY PATIENTS

When volunteer Bill Hardenberg arrives at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit each Tuesday afternoon, his mission is clear: to cuddle tiny patients until they settle down and fall asleep. “It’s extremely peaceful for both the baby and the cuddler,” says Hardenberg, who has been volunteering in the Summerlin Hospital NICU for three years. “The greatest enjoyment we receive is watching a baby who is uncomfortable relax in our arms.”

Hardenberg’s experience, first to his 12 cousins who lived next door while he was growing up, and then as a father of two and grandfather of three, shows as he gently rocks and soothes fussy babies into a contented, peaceful sleep.

“We love our cuddlers,” said Linda LaPointe, NICU manager. “They are an extension of our NICU team, and an extra pair of loving arms who help our little ones and provide extra attention when their parents aren’t able to be there.”

To learn more about becoming a volunteer cuddler, visit summerlinhospital.com/volunteer or call 702-233-7532.



YOUR CHILD NEEDS SURGERY ... now what?



Cristina Metildi, MD
Pediatric Surgeon

Pediatric surgeons like Cristina Metildi, MD, diagnose, treat and manage a wide range of children's surgical needs, including everything from certain birth defects to trauma injuries and beyond. Dr. Metildi shares her insights on what to expect before, during and after your child's surgery.

Get to Know Dr. Metildi

Very early in life, Dr. Metildi knew she was going to follow in her surgeon father's footsteps. She chose to specialize in pediatric

surgery because it allows her to take care of a wide range of conditions while helping to improve the lives of young people.

"It's so gratifying to gain the trust of a child who feels poorly but is willing to take a chance on you," she says. "Children are so appreciative. It's rewarding to see that smile appear when they feel better."

Dr. Metildi was a double major and two-sport athlete at the University of Chicago. She next attended Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, followed by a General Surgery residency at University of California San Diego – where she extended her training to pick up a Master of Advanced Studies in Clinical Research along the way. Her Pediatric Surgery fellowship followed.

While the active doctor still plays softball from time to time she says, "I've redirected my competitive nature towards things like CrossFit® and obstacle courses like Tough Mudder®."

The animal-loving surgeon says she is a "kid at heart" who would probably have become a veterinarian if she had not become a pediatric surgeon.

Q: My child needs to see a pediatric surgeon. What happens now?

Be prepared to discuss your child's condition and medical history. Bring a list of all medical problems, prior surgeries and hospitalizations, and current medications. If next steps include surgery, you should be informed of the risks, benefits and potential complications, as well as the expected course and the likelihood of postoperative admission to the hospital. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

Q: What steps should I take prior to my child's surgery?

You'll receive your expected arrival time and a reminder to review the registration process. I strongly encourage parents to ask questions about insurance coverage and expected co-pays prior to the day of surgery. You will also be notified when to stop feeding your child to ensure as safe a surgery as possible. Call the office if your child has had any change in health (such as a sore throat, cough, fever or wheezing). Certain conditions would require postponing the surgery. Finally, arrive on time the day of surgery to avoid delay or cancellation.

Q: How can I best prepare my child for an upcoming surgery?

Address any anxiety your child may have before you enter the hospital. That may require more conversations with the surgeon. It's important for the parent not to appear overly anxious. If the option exists, it always helps to pre-register at the hospital prior to surgery rather than the day of surgery. Have your questions on insurance coverage and co-pays answered beforehand. The office staff can often provide helpful information.

Q: What typically happens after the operation?

After the operation, the surgeon will discuss what was done and what to expect. You will be given instructions regarding allowed activity level, any necessary restrictions, and how to care for your child postoperatively in terms of bathing and showering, wound care and pain control. You will also be provided with a number to call should you have questions or concerns and to schedule a follow-up appointment with the surgeon. ■





Essential life skills for 16-year-olds

HELP YOUR TEEN TACKLE THESE NEED-TO-KNOW TASKS

“The days are long, but the years are short” is an oft-repeated phrase that rings especially true for parents of 16-year-olds. It may feel like just yesterday you were rocking your “little ones” to sleep, but the reality is they will soon be venturing out on their own. Whether your teen is prepping for college or planning some other adventure, having the following skills will help them launch independent lives.

Money management

Digital wallets like Venmo make it easy to transfer funds, but it's still important to understand the basics of traditional banking. If they don't already have one, now's a good time for your teen to open their own account. (Check with your financial institution to see which one is best for minors and whether it must be held jointly with a parent or guardian.) Introduce the concept of budgeting and instruct them on financial fundamentals like making deposits and withdrawing funds. Many banks offer age-appropriate one-on-one or group financial education classes. See if yours has one that is right for your teenager.

Smart shopping skills

Coupons, sales and special offers may not mean much now, but once your child is on a typical young adult's budget it will help to have a seasoned set of smart shopping skills. Bring them along on a grocery run and demonstrate how to compare prices and take advantage of other money-saving methods.

Finding and holding a part-time job

Sixteen is the ideal age for an introduction to the working world and part-time jobs are a great place to start. Share smart strategies for finding available openings and let them take it from there. Creating a resume, sticking to an assigned schedule and managing earned income are all important building blocks for future success.

Conversing and making connections

Establishing eye contact, offering a firm handshake and making conversation are all everyday talents essential for young adults out on their own. Emphasize the advantages of establishing connections and reinforce the message that digital devices have no place at shared mealtimes and other social settings.

Navigating to and from unfamiliar places

These long-time passengers may now be in the driver's seat, so help instill a sense of direction in your on-the-go teens. Show them how to safely use a GPS and other navigation tools. If available, familiarize them with public transportation in your area.

Your 16-year-old is on the threshold of adulthood but a few years remain to provide them with knowledge they'll need for a life on their own. Take advantage of this time now to teach them everyday skills that will serve them well in the future. ■

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Does your teen have “Money Smarts?” Join financial executives from Bank of Nevada for a one-hour workshop created to help teens better understand personal finance. Learn more at summerlinhospital.com/bank.



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Caring *for* kids and teens every day!

Treating kids is different than treating adults. That's why we have the Children's Medical Center and a dedicated pediatric ER staff available for your precious ones 24 hours a day ... every day!

- Specialty trained pediatric nurses and medical specialists
- Pediatric surgical services
- Pediatric imaging – X-rays, MRIs and CTs
- Outpatient physical/occupational/speech therapy
- Pediatric Intensive Care Unit – PICU
- Advanced maternity services
- Childbirth education classes
- Neonatal Intensive Care Unit – NICU



Learn more at summerlinhospital.com/pediatrics



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CARING FOR KIDS AND TEENS FROM
SUMMERLIN HOSPITAL

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Director, Children's Medical Center

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