



# Gynecology services for women's wellness

Northside Hospital provides *a lifetime of care* for women

**I**n life, you assume many roles. You're a daughter. A mother. A sister. A wife. A partner. A friend. A grandmother. You're a woman who takes care of others, takes care of business and, only then, takes care of yourself. You've navigated life's passages. Along the way you've built relationships with your doctors based on trust and familiarity, and you've become comfortable with the hospital or medical facilities where they choose to practice.

During your lifetime, it's important that you take good care of yourself—even if your reasoning is that you need to be there to care for others. Understanding your body and its natural changes, as well as unnatural signs and symptoms, is the best way to ensure your good health.



be times when you need a doctor and may require a hospital's services to help with diagnosis and treatment. At Northside Hospital, we specialize in women's healthcare, so we understand what a woman needs at each stage of her life.

Our mission is to provide you with the best possible services. Northside offers diagnostics, treatment and nationally recognized maternity services at our multiple locations, including hospitals, outpatient centers and Women's Centers (the most comprehensive in the state). We emphasize a level of care that always considers your emotional well-being in addition to your physical health.

Every woman should be familiar with the signs and symptoms of common female health conditions and be proactive, taking advantage of screenings as well as discussing concerns with her doctor to maintain good health.

## Taking care of you

Becoming a woman begins years before you're considered an adult. With the onset of menstruation, you need to start developing good gynecologic care. In your teens and 20s, you begin to know your body. What's normal cramping? Is your period interfering with daily activities? What's a prolonged period versus a normal cycle? Knowing the answers to these questions can help you have a productive conversation with your primary care physician and gynecologist.

Taking care of your health is a team effort. Of course, you have to make healthy choices, but there will still

## Uterine fibroids

Approximately three out of four American women have uterine fibroids, common benign (noncancerous) tumors. What causes fibroids is unknown. Not all women with fibroids experience symptoms, but for some women, their symptoms can be so severe that their daily lives are affected.

Until a few years ago, major surgery to remove the tumors or the entire uterus was the only effective treatment. However, now depending on your condition,

*During your lifetime, it's important that you take good care of yourself—even if your reasoning is that you need to be there to care for others.*



a variety of minimally invasive nonsurgical and surgical options are available. Discuss with your physician which alternatives are appropriate for you.

Uterine fibroid embolization (UFE), performed by an interventional radiologist, has been successfully used for the past 10 years. This nonsurgical outpatient procedure can provide relief of major symptoms including pain, excessive and prolonged bleeding and frequent urination.

In addition, laparoscopic and robotic techniques are very effective in removing fibroids of all sizes. Surgeons at Northside are recognized nationally and internationally for their high level of expertise in minimally invasive surgical techniques. Northside Hospital ranks in the top 5 percent of all robotic GYN programs nationwide.

modalities. If surgery is necessary, our approach is to use the least invasive procedure possible. We offer both laparoscopic and robotic expertise, which has ranked us No. 1 in Georgia.

## Maternity

Having a baby is an amazing, beautiful experience, but at the same time it can be distressing and exhausting. During your nine-month journey, you'll have a host of questions and concerns. You'll want to know how to stay healthy, how to prepare for your baby's arrival and what to expect during labor and delivery.

Northside Hospital is unsurpassed in maternity and newborn services. We make the childbirth experience a partnership among mother, family, obstetrician, other healthcare professionals and the hospital.

## Symptoms of uterine fibroids

### Call your doctor if you have:

- Heavy, prolonged periods
- Anemia
- Pain or excessive pressure between the hip bones or at the back of the legs
- Pain during sexual intercourse
- Frequent need to urinate
- Constipation or bloating
- An enlarged abdomen
- Infertility

## Endometriosis

Are you among the more than 5.5 million women who have endometriosis? Symptoms typically start with or after your first menstruation. For most women, the disease is rarely found after menopause. While not all women experience symptoms, the most common symptom is pelvic pain, which can occur at any time during your monthly cycle, accompanied by fatigue and infertility. Treatment options depend on factors such as your age, the severity of your symptoms, the severity of the disease and your future plans for conception.

At Northside, we treat endometriosis with a range of



Pregnancy and childbirth are natural milestones in a woman's life. And for most of us, everything goes smoothly. But it's also reassuring to know that when you come to Northside, you've come to the hospital that's ready to manage any unanticipated event. That's why Northside Hospital is the name that's become synonymous with maternity care.

## Gynecologic cancer

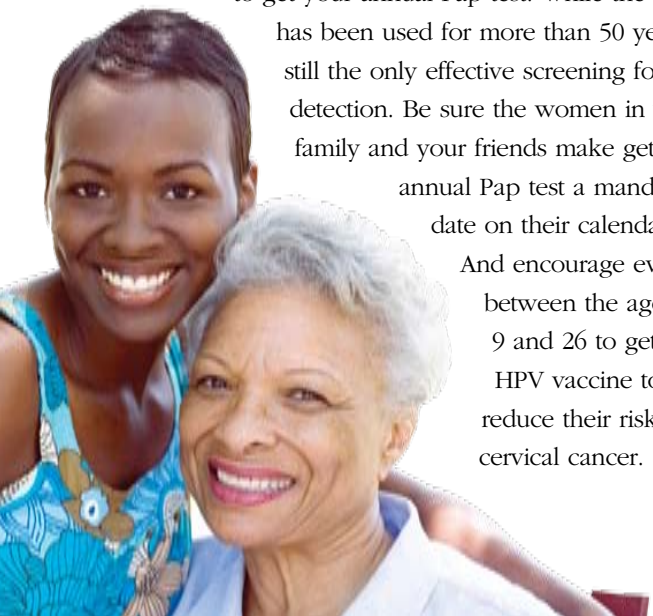
Early detection is the key to successful treatment for the more than 70,000 women in the United States diagnosed with a gynecologic (GYN) cancer—cervical, ovarian and endometrial cancers—each year. A GYN cancer can occur at any age, and as you grow older, your risk for certain cancers increases significantly. So even if you're beyond your childbearing years, you shouldn't stop having regular gynecologic exams.

As the Southeast's leader in GYN cancer care, Northside diagnoses and treats more cases of gynecologic cancer than any other hospital in Georgia. We were recently selected by the National Cancer Institute as a participating site in the Community Cancer Centers Program, offering expanded research opportunities and state-of-the-art cancer care.

## Cervical cancer

This year, more than 11,000 American women will develop invasive cervical cancer. Warning signs include abnormal vaginal bleeding, increased vaginal discharge, pelvic pain or pain during sexual intercourse. Don't forget to get your annual Pap test. While the Pap test has been used for more than 50 years, it's still the only effective screening for early detection. Be sure the women in your family and your friends make getting an annual Pap test a mandatory date on their calendars.

And encourage everyone between the ages of 9 and 26 to get the HPV vaccine to reduce their risk of cervical cancer.



## Ovarian cancer

Ovarian cancer, which occurs most often in women ages 50 and older, is called the "silent" cancer because symptoms are vague or misdiagnosed and usually not detected until it's in an advanced stage. For this reason, it's important to understand your body, and if you should notice a symptom that's persistent, never assume "it's nothing."

Unfortunately, there are no screenings to test for the disease, but research is making strides. As the Southeast leader in GYN cancer, Northside Hospital is working in collaboration with the Georgia Institute of Technology and the Ovarian Cancer Institute to develop both a diagnostic test for ovarian cancer and new, effective treatments for the disease.



## Symptoms of ovarian cancer

- Bloating
- Pelvic or abdominal pain
- Trouble eating or feeling full quickly
- Urinary frequency and urgency
- Unexplained weight gain or loss
- Postmenopausal bleeding

## Endometrial (uterine) cancer

Endometrial, or uterine, cancer is the most common GYN cancer in the United States, affecting nearly 40,000 women a year. While all women may be at risk, most cases occur when women go through menopause or are postmenopausal. As in the case of ovarian cancer, there's no accurate screening or test, so recognizing symptoms, such as postmenopausal bleeding, irregular vaginal discharge or pain or pressure in the pelvis, is vital for an early diagnosis.

## A lifetime of care

You may be a woman who assumes many roles, but you must take care of yourself. Over time you've created a team to depend on, so remember that you're not alone. Your team understands a woman and her journey through life. At Northside Hospital, you have all the resources you'll need for *a lifetime of care*.