

HEALTH

SUMMER 2009

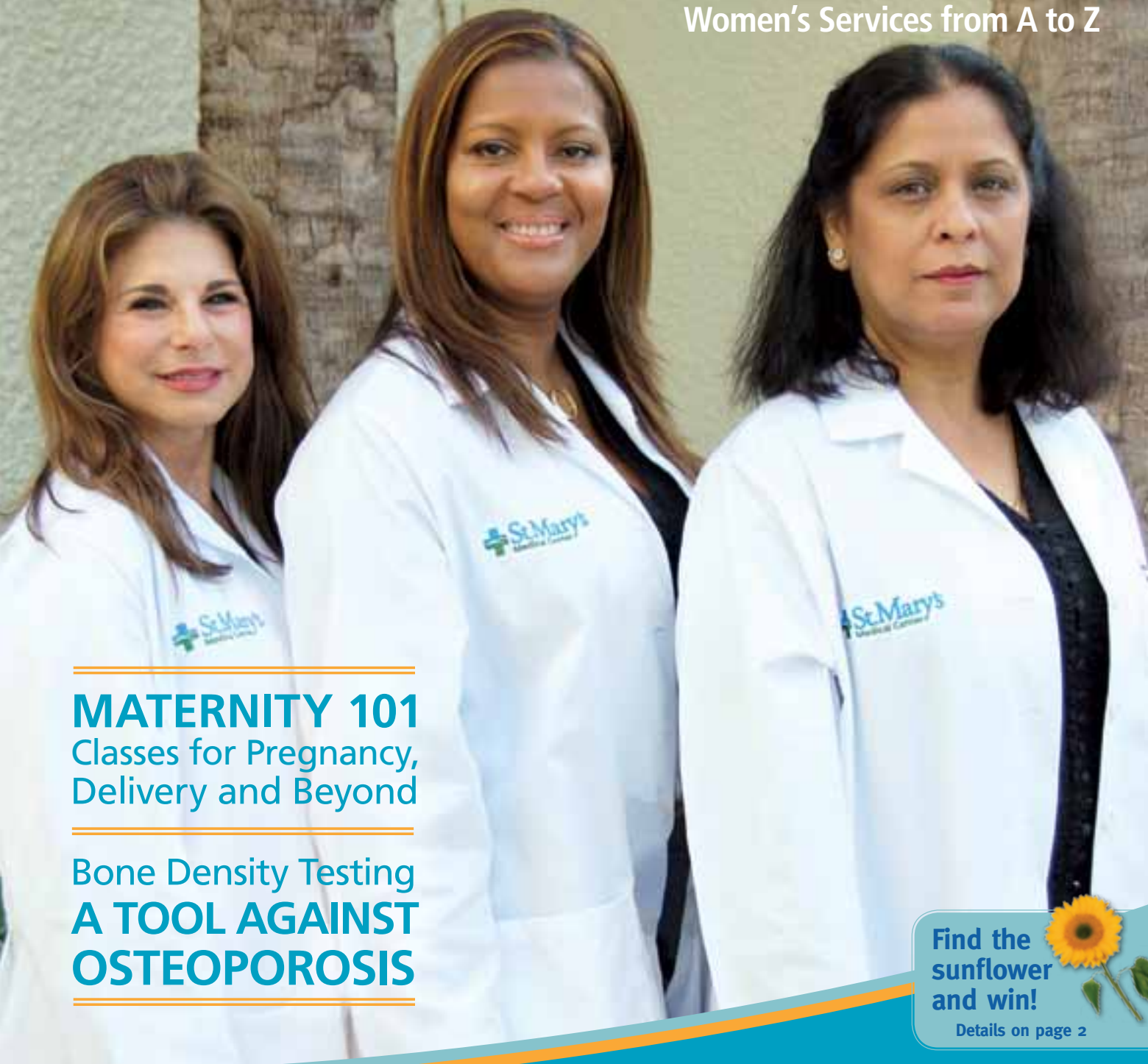
for Life



St. Mary's
Medical Center

ST. MARY'S CARES FOR WOMEN

Women's Services from A to Z



MATERNITY 101

Classes for Pregnancy,
Delivery and Beyond

Bone Density Testing
**A TOOL AGAINST
OSTEOPOROSIS**

Find the
sunflower
and win!



Details on page 2



Dear Neighbors:

We provide many services here at St. Mary's Medical Center, and one area we take pride in is Women's Services. We are proud to say that in 2008, The Birthplace at St. Mary's helped new moms deliver 3,923 babies, while our Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit provided care to 1,465 newborns with special medical needs.

We believe the birth of a child should be an extraordinary occasion, and our entire hospital works to make that a reality for the women and families who come to St. Mary's for delivery. From the facility to the latest equipment to the expertise of the staff and physicians, our hospital provides the community with an environment where a child enters the world with access to the best in quality care. Additionally, our Level III NICU offers parents assurance that quality neonatal care is only a few steps away if their child should need those lifesaving services.

Beyond childbirth, St. Mary's also provides women with state-of-the-art care for women's health care. Women can rely on St. Mary's for specialized inpatient procedures including hysterectomy, uterine fibroid embolization and breast cancer

treatment, as well as for routine screening services, such as mammography and bone densitometry. Screening is essential in the early detection of breast cancer, resulting in better outcomes for women. To that end, our Imaging Services department now offers digital mammography, which lends an advantage over film mammography by allowing X-ray technicians and radiologists to manipulate the images for better clarity.

In closing, we are pleased to offer these services and many more to the women and families of the greater Palm Beach community. As it has been for generations at St. Mary's Medical Center, you can rely on the quality care that our highly qualified staff and physicians provide.

Sincerely,

Davide M. Carbone
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
St. Mary's Medical Center
Children's Hospital at St. Mary's

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Health for Life is published quarterly as a service of St. Mary's Medical Center. It is not intended to provide personal medical advice, which should be obtained directly from a physician. If you have a health issue or concern, please contact your healthcare provider.

St. Mary's Medical Center | Children's Hospital at St. Mary's

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Win a SMMC First Aid Kit!



Find the sunflower hidden on pages 3 through 7, then call (561) 882-9100 or e-mail SMH-News@tenethealth.com with the correct page number, your name and contact information to receive a free first aid kit.

We welcome your comments and suggestions for Health for Life along with your submission.



ON THE COVER (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT): Renee Scharf, MD, Medical Director of the Rehabilitation Institute; Debra Jones, MD, Division Director of OB/Gyn; Sheila Shaw, MD, Division Director of Medicine, Internal Medicine

Delivering Quality Care in Childbirth

Whether you're giving birth for the first time or planning for delivery of your third son or daughter, as a mom, you want the very best in health care for your child. The Birthplace at St. Mary's Medical Center offers proven obstetrical services that care for moms and babies from ante partum (pre-delivery) to postpartum care.

"St. Mary's Medical Center is unlike any other facility in our community when it comes to maternal care,"



Debra Jones, MD

says Debra Jones, MD, perinatologist at St. Mary's Medical Center. "Women want to feel secure in giving birth, and they can do that here because the hospital has

in-house obstetrician/gynecologists [OB/GYNs], perinatologists, neonatologists, anesthesiologists, midwives, and a fully staffed Level III neonatal intensive care unit [NICU]—all available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year."

In fact, St. Mary's has the largest, most experienced NICU in Palm Beach County. Indeed, the staff and facilities are a big part of the reason why St. Mary's is the hospital that many local physicians trust to care for their obstetrics patients. It also explains why other hospitals in the region transfer labor-and-delivery patients to St. Mary's when medical complications arise that require a higher level of care. In addition to these services, St. Mary's offers West Palm Beach County's only Regional Perinatal Intensive Care Center—one of 11 hospitals with this distinction in the entire state of Florida.

"The Birthplace at St. Mary's Medical Center is top of the line in comfort and services," says Pat Harding, MD, Section Chief of OB-GYN at St. Mary's. "We tend to the needs of a population at risk, as well as to those women who don't experience complications. Our Level III NICU and highly qualified physician and nursing staffs make St. Mary's the place to give birth in Palm Beach County."

Fetal MRI—A Very Special Service

Perinatologists, obstetrics physicians specializing in high-risk pregnancies, use ultrasound and other diagnostic tools to determine if an unborn baby has health complications that need to be addressed prior to or at the time of delivery. When one of the seven perinatologists at St. Mary's Medical Center suspects that an unborn child suffers from a central nervous system issue, such as hydrocephalous, he or she sends the mom to Maria Mata, MD, a radiologist at St. Mary's specializing in pediatric neuroradiology. Dr. Mata performs fetal magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to confirm the perinatologist's preliminary diagnosis.

St. Mary's is one of the few hospitals in South Florida that provides fetal MRI.

Ready Right Now

If medical complications should arise, St. Mary's has the staff and equipment to skillfully handle emergencies. Other departments at St. Mary's also feature around-the-clock medical staff to offer a full spectrum of healthcare services for labor-and-delivery patients.

For moms who require Cesarean sections (surgical deliveries), the Birthplace at St. Mary's provides professional, expert staff and operating rooms dedicated to this service. Physicians and nurses strive to make the procedure special, and thanks to precise administration of anesthesia, mothers can be awake to experience the birth. Fathers and other support partners can attend, too, and moms are typically able to see their babies immediately after delivery before going to the recovery room.

"The remarkable thing is St. Mary's has offered this level of care to the community for quite some time," says Dr. Jones. "It's all already functioning and providing maternity patients with the best possible scenario for good outcomes."

To find a St. Mary's Women's Services physician, call (561) 882-9100 or visit us online at www.stmarysmc.com.



Uterine Fibroid Embolization— An Alternative to Hysterectomy

According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, uterine fibroids—typically benign tumors of the uterus that cause symptoms including dysfunctional uterine bleeding, urinary incontinence, back pain and constipation—are responsible for approximately 60 percent of hysterectomies performed in the United States.

Fibroids can be as small as the coins in your pocket or large enough to make a uterus swell to mimic pregnancy. Some women report symptoms that include heavy bleeding and pain so severe it requires medical intervention.

Historically, uterine fibroid treatment involved hysterectomy, but another option for dealing with this condition is uterine fibroid embolization (UFE), a minimally invasive procedure that can be performed by interventional radiologists. This treatment is available to women in the greater Palm Beach community through the St. Mary's Imaging Center.

"Greater than 90 percent of the time, patient symptoms are alleviated by this procedure," says Chad G. Kelman, MD, Radiology Director at St. Mary's and board-certified diagnostic radiologist with additional qualifications in interventional radiology. "UFE offers patients an option to preserve the uterus, as well as less recovery time and diminished scar tissue due to the nature of this minimally invasive technique."

The Basics of UFE

When a patient arrives at the hospital for the procedure, she

should plan to stay overnight. Before the procedure, she will be put under anesthesia. The interventional radiologist will then introduce a thin catheter into her vascular system via an artery in the groin. The catheter is threaded to the uterus in order to deliver an embolic agent to block blood supply to the fibroid, causing it to shrink. As the fibroid reduces in size, the symptoms typically disappear.

Back in the Groove

While some patients experience cramps or a low-grade fever for several days after the procedure, most see marked reduction in symptoms within a few days or weeks.

"Most patients go home within 24 hours on antibiotics and a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug," says Dr. Kelman. "I advise patients to take it easy for a week. Within a day or two, most are back to their normal routines."

To learn more about procedures and services available at St. Mary's Medical Center, visit www.stmarysmc.com.



Chad G. Kelman, MD

Could UFE Be a Solution for YOU?

"The embolization procedure is most often used to help ease the discomfort of women with uterine fibroids who are in their late 30s to late 40s, with the end point being menopause. However, UFE may also be an option for some women who are post-menopausal."

— Chad G. Kelman, MD, Chief of Radiology at St. Mary's Medical Center and board-certified diagnostic radiologist in interventional radiology with additional credentials on staff at St. Mary's Medical Center



Available at St. Mary's Imaging Center

In addition to uterine fibroid embolization, St. Mary's Imaging Center offers magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), computed tomography (CT) scans, nuclear medicine, digital mammography, bone densitometry, and ultrasound and X-ray services.



Vikki McGinnis, BSRT,
Director of Imaging
Services for St. Mary's

Mammography— An Annual Screening

You're 40 and loving it. Your career is going well, your family is thriving, you've had many wonderful experiences and look forward to many more. However, there's one thing you need to do this year that you haven't done before—have a mammogram.

St. Mary's Medical Center is available to provide high-quality digital mammography, breast magnetic resonance imaging and ultrasound breast imaging.

"The Imaging Services department provides outstanding patient care from a team of dedicated professionals whose goal is to provide technical expertise as well as support and guidance to our patients," says Vikki McGinnis, BSRT, Director of Imaging Services for St. Mary's. "Many women are anxious when they arrive for their procedures and the staff reaches out to comfort these patients and alleviate their concerns."

In order to effectively treat breast cancer and increase the

chance of survival, early detection is essential. That's why screenings, an annual clinical exam and monthly breast self-exams are so important.

"Breast cancer strikes approximately one in eight women—it can happen to any woman at any age," says McGinnis. "I encourage women to stay ahead of the disease by making and keeping appointments for an annual mammogram after turning 40, and earlier if their physicians recommend it based on risk factors such as family history."

Is it time for your annual mammogram? Call (561) 881-2828 to schedule your appointment for digital mammography at St. Mary's Imaging Center.

A Treatment for Incompetent Cervix

Imagine a situation where a woman has several pregnancies ending in a miscarriage or a premature delivery due to incompetent cervix, and the course of events will not allow the premature infant to survive. If the infant does survive, he or she endures low birth weight, possibly hydrocephalus, mental retardation, and any number of problems associated with prematurity. The child may suffer for the remainder of his or her life. The family may also suffer; statistics prove that many marriages are unable to withstand the pressure of losing

multiple pregnancies. The cost could be years of anguish and possibly the need for millions of dollars in health care during the child's lifetime.

Incompetent cervix also causes conditions and complications with episodes of severe uterine infection and hemorrhage. Emergency surgery is necessary, and the emotional trauma often leaves deep scars.

Most women with incompetent cervix benefit from a transvaginal



Leroy Charles, MD, FACOG

procedure and will carry a mostly normal pregnancy. However, a number of those surgeries fail.

In 1965, a physician named Dr. R.C. Benson developed a traditional procedure called transabdominal cerclage. Statistics suggested that this technique was difficult, and in some instances, patients experienced serious bleeding during the surgery.

More recently, laparoscopic cervico isthmique cerclage (LTAC), a minimally invasive procedure, was developed by Leroy Charles, MD, FACOG, an obstetrician/gynecologist at St. Mary's Medical Center. With this procedure, blood loss is not an issue, and the number of healthy infants that have been born (including one set of twins) is remarkable.

The surgery requires a special suture to be placed where the cervix meets the body of the uterus. During pregnancy, the uterus enlarges and the suture prevents the cervix from shortening and stretching, restoring the integrity of the cervix. Pregnant women having this procedure are closely monitored and do well afterward.

The first woman to have the procedure was the sister of an employee of Dr. Charles. She delivered by Cesarean section a full term baby of 7 lbs. 14 oz. after five failed pregnancies. Since then, Dr. Charles can count 37 surgeries, 32 deliveries at term, and one miscarriage using LTAC.

Marie Morel, MD; Debra Jones, MD; and Ruel Stoessel, MD, obstetrician/gynecologists at St. Mary's, have teamed with Dr. Charles over the past five years to successfully perform LTAC on pregnant and non-pregnant women, giving them hope for carrying a pregnancy to term.

"We all know that having a child is a miracle," says Dr. Charles. "Second to giving birth, there is nothing more rewarding than to participate and aid women to realize their dreams of having a child. I am very grateful to have been able to affect so many outcomes with the laparoscopic transabdominal cerclage [LTAC]."

The Truth Behind Hormone Science

By Gloria Hakkarainen, MD, FACOG, ABAAM, Obstetrician/Gynecologist



Gloria Hakkarainen, MD, FACOG, ABAAM

The newest research shows that hormone replacement therapy (HRT) actually benefits patients when the dosing method and medication are properly chosen and when patients are monitored closely by their doctors.

Based on two trials, many women stopped taking their hormones and have suffered from unrelenting symptoms of menopause. Many forms of HRT exist, and the risk analysis was blindly extrapolated to all forms of hormone use, both bio-identical and synthetic, creating more confusion. As more rational and in-depth analysis came to light, we were able to see that by 2005 the hormone story was beginning to change.

Clearly HRT has many beneficial effects on the body, improving skin quality and integrity, eliminating wrinkles, boosting immune system function, relieving symptoms of muscle aches, improving the elasticity and collagen content of the pelvic tissues, keeping the brain sharp, preventing osteoporosis, fighting depression and much more. Modern day hormone analysis provides not only a look at estrogen stores in the body but also at a whole host of other hormones, including testosterone, progesterone, dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA), melatonin, cortisol and thyroid to name a few.

The latest data from North American Menopause Society (NAMS) also shows that when women start to replace declining hormones earlier than what was done in the National Institutes of Health Women's Health Initiative (WHI) study (late 40s and 50s), the aging affect of hormone depletion can actually be delayed or reversed. The way the drug is administered—orally, sublingually, sub-buccally, transdermally, transvaginally or via gel, patch, cream or injection—can be customized for patient convenience and effectiveness.

Hormones are special chemical molecules that direct many fundamental and critically important processes of the body. They can act on tissues a long distance away from their secretion site (endocrine), on neighboring tissues (paracrine) and on the individual cell itself that released it (autocrine). Each endocrine organ system makes a distinct hormone whose release is controlled by two areas in the brain, the anterior pituitary gland and the hypothalamus.

There is a complex interplay between various hormones as the brain receives and senses the needs of the body and works to ensure that just enough of each hormone is made. Replacing just one hormone doesn't make sense, as we see declining levels of many hormones with menopause. Evaluating and studying the hormone profile across systems ensures that all critical areas are treated.

It is important to have hormone levels checked. When HRT is administered safely under the direction of a hormone specialist, you can enjoy the well-known benefits of hormone therapy to rejuvenate your total mind, body and spirit.

For a referral to a physician who can help you understand more about hormone replacement therapy, call (561) 882-9100 or visit www.stmarysmc.com and click on "Find a Physician."



» Test Your Bone Strength «

Osteoporosis is a condition that causes bones to become weak and easily break. The National Osteoporosis Foundation estimates that by 2010, roughly 9 million American women will have osteoporosis. Risk factors associated with osteoporosis can include a diet low in calcium and vitamin D; certain medications such as corticosteroids, some anticonvulsants or excessive thyroid replacement drugs; inactivity; cigarette smoking; excessive alcohol intake; and low estrogen or testosterone levels.

By undergoing a simple, noninvasive bone density test with St. Mary's Medical Center's Hologic Discovery A scanner, you can discover your osteoporosis risk. With test results in hand, you and your doctor can make plans to accommodate to your specific calcium needs.

To learn more, visit www.stmarysmc.com, click on the "Health Resources," link and select "O" under the Health Encyclopedia section for a list of health concerns that includes osteoporosis.

To schedule an appointment for a bone density test, call (561) 881-2828.

Neurologic Injury in the Female Athlete

by David Petruska, MD, FACS, CIME



David Petruska, MD

There has been an explosion in interest in women's sports over the last decade, with increasing crossover to traditionally male-dominated sports, such as boxing. Cheerleading and gymnastics have the highest rate of severe neurologic injury.

Equestrian sports have associated risk, too. This was recently publicized by the signing of Nicole's Law by Florida Governor Charlie Crist. Nicole was a 10-year-old girl who died from a head injury after falling off a horse in Acreage, Florida. Soccer also seems to have an association between heading the ball and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (also known as ALS or Lou Gehrig's Disease). All these sports are particularly popular in South Florida.

Traditional male-dominated sports have pursued prevention of neurologic injuries through equipment changes, training and education. Sports played predominately by females have lagged behind in this area, partly because of lack of direct contact. However, injuries can occur from equipment and falling, so prevention of injury remains key. Furthermore, female athletes need to be proactive in understanding the risks of hormonal changes and joint injury (especially knees) with overtraining. Neurologic injury can be catastrophic no matter what the age.

A Holistic Approach to Regaining Health

The Rehabilitation Institute at St. Mary's Medical Center offers a creative, holistic team approach to providing care and support to West Palm Beach women and their family

members who are in weakened or disabled conditions. The goal of the Rehabilitation Institute is to facilitate patients' progress toward functional independence.

The approach reflects the hospital's commitment to the mission values of excellence, leadership, dignity and innovation for people in our community. St. Mary's Medical Center Medical Director of the Rehabilitation Institute, Renee Scharf, MD, and the entire staff of the center, echo this philosophy.



Renee Scharf, MD

Dr. Scharf, a board-certified physical medicine and rehabilitation physician with more than 20 years experience, champions a multidisciplinary approach in treating patients. Through development of

individual treatment plans that identify patient goals, Dr. Scarf and her team coordinate efforts and help to ensure all therapies are carried through to recovery.

St. Mary's Rehabilitation Institute features comprehensive lifestyle rehabilitation, including:

- physical, occupational, speech and recreational therapies
- coordination and continuity of care, with both a comprehensive inpatient rehabilitation unit and outpatient therapy programs
- dedicated unit with private rooms
- specialized physicians on staff as a feature of our state-designated trauma center
- a pain management center
- state-designated spinal cord injury center

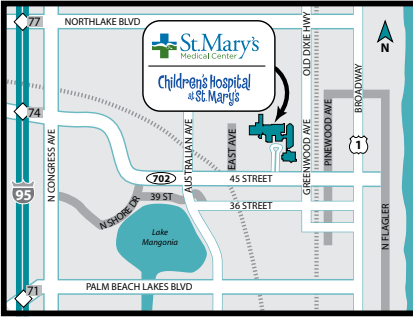
To learn more about the Rehabilitation Institute at St. Mary's Medical Center, visit www.stmarysmc.com.



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There are plenty of reasons to choose St. Mary's for maternity and neonatal services, including caring people, advanced technology and more than 70 years of experience.

Plus, our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit was ranked the "Best Hospital Program" by the *Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches* in 2008.

For more information or physician referral, please call **561-882-9100**.

Faith, community and healthcare for more than 70 years.

MY CHOICE
as a woman and a mother.



- The largest Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit in Palm Beach County
- The only state-designated center for high risk moms and babies in Palm Beach County
- Delivers more babies than any other Palm Beach County hospital
- Neonatologist and anesthesiologist in-house 24/7
- Specialized physicians and staff
- Provides comprehensive child birth education
- Dedicated children's hospital offering a wide array of services

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