

Kids Connection

Area's Only Pediatric Unit Helps Toddler Get Well Soon



Getting sick at any age can be unnerving. But when you're only 14 months old, it can be downright scary for both the child and parents. That's why Kate Shannon is grateful that Liberty Hospital has the only Pediatric Unit north of the river dedicated to caring for young children and teens.

Her 14-month-old daughter, Addelie, needed the unit's care when she became ill just a few days after Thanksgiving. "Addelie had been sick for a day or so. She was running a high fever and was lethargic," Shannon said. When she checked with Addelie's doctor, Liberty Hospital pediatrician, Paul Lively, DO, he advised her to take the toddler to the hospital's emergency room.

There, Addelie was diagnosed with a rotavirus, a viral infection common among children that causes diarrhea, fever, nausea and vomiting. The virus had caused Addelie to become dehydrated. She was promptly admitted to the hospital's new Pediatric Unit.

Once there, the unit's specially trained pediatric nurses safely tucked her into bed, carefully watching over her for the next four days.

"The Pediatric Unit was very nice and the hospital is only five minutes from our home," Shannon said. "I was able to stay with Addelie in her room around the clock, and once she started feeling better, we watched movies on the room's DVD player."

And while the new Pediatric Unit has all the comforts of home, according to Dr. Lively, outstanding nursing care is the reason he admits patients like Addelie to the unit. "There's a saying in pediatrics 'children are NOT just little adults,'" Dr. Lively said. Everything from the medications to the equipment needed to treat children is different.

"Liberty Hospital's new Pediatric Unit is not only equipped to care for children, its staff has excellent training and experience in treating children with everything from dehydration to serious bacterial infections," he said. "That makes it possible for us to

provide compassionate, age-appropriate care for children and families in the Northland."

As for Addelie, today you'd never know how sick the active toddler once was. "We came to Liberty Hospital because it was convenient," Shannon said. "We stayed because the nursing care we received on the Pediatric Unit was excellent."

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Liberty Hospital Pediatric Unit is Dedicated to Treating Northland Children



Liberty Hospital has been committed to caring for Northland area children and families since its opening in 1974. Just last year, the hospital's previous Pediatric Unit relocated to new quarters and expanded from seven to 10 private beds. The unit is still the only one of its kind north of the river.

A new feature is enhanced security. The unit remains locked 24 hours a day. Visitors must request permission from a member of the nursing staff in order to enter. Like the former Pediatric Unit, the new rooms include sleeper benches so parents can stay overnight. The private rooms also are larger, with much bigger windows to let natural light in.

The well-stocked play room has a library of children's books, toys, board games and puzzles. For older patients, there are video games such as PlayStation 2, a DVD/VCR player and a wide selection of movies.

Typically, the unit cares for children with a variety of health problems, including broken bones, anterior cruciate ligament repairs, respiratory problems such as asthma, RSV and pneumonia, for children having tonsils and adenoids removed and other minor surgeries and even young trauma patients once they have been stabilized.

