

Clockwise from top, the front lobby of the James Graham Brown Cancer Center; micromanipulation station used to inject eggs with sperm at the University of Louisville Health Care Outpatient Center; a patient room at Baptist Hospital East's Tower 6; the hallway of the labor and delivery area of Floyd Memorial Hospital.

# THE WOMEN'S GUIDE TO HOSPITALS

From luxurious labor and delivery wards (with on-call stylists) to gender-specific cardiac testing centers, **Jenni Laidman** uncovers what every woman needs to know about being a smart health-care consumer in our city.

**I**t has taken long enough, but women are transforming medicine from without and from within. Sue Stout Tamme, president of Baptist Hospital East, remembers when she was the only female hospital administrator in Kentucky who wasn't a nun. Doctors were boys. Nurses were girls. "The No. 1 phone call I used to get was, 'Can you find me a female ob-gyn?'" she recalls. No one has to search now. "I can find you a female doctor who does whatever you want," Tamme says. "We've come so far in 35 years." Catering to women is smart. We have clout. We make 80 percent of the health-care decisions, research shows. To win our dollars, hospitals woo us with labor-and-delivery rooms that look like hotel suites, special all-female surgical floors and even pink totes for outpatient surgery patients. But the changes are more than superficial. Here are some of the latest health-care innovations targeted directly to your needs ... and, yes, your dollars. >

## 'SPA-STYLE' MAMMOGRAMS AND OTHER UPGRADES

It used to be a medical procedure. Now hospitals strive to make mammograms a spa experience — just ignore that strange breast-squishing part. All the hospitals have imaging centers, and many of them are lovely and state-of-the-art, with digital mammography machines engineered to provide a better view of the breast, foam pads to make the procedure more comfortable and access to magnetic-resonance-imaging mammography and MRI-guided biopsy. Here are a few imaging centers of note.

► **The Women's Center** at Sts. Mary and Elizabeth Hospital, 1850 Bluegrass Ave.: It's all about knocking down barriers. Don't have a sitter? They'll watch your little ones in their attractive play area. Have to bring Mom here in the middle of your workday? Four computer terminals await your use. Can't get away from work during the day? They offer evening hours and once a month are open on Saturday.

► **Baptist Hospital East**, 4000 Kresge Way: This center is the only one in greater Louisville with certification for mammographically guided breast biopsy. It is acquiring American College of Radiology certification for breast ultrasound, which only U of L's James Graham Brown Breast Care Center currently has.

► **Jewish Hospital Medical Center East**, 3920 Dutchmans Lane: Among the most spa-like of the centers, its white terry robes are so popular that patients try to buy them. Come early for your appointment, and chances are good you'll be on your way home before your scheduled exam time.

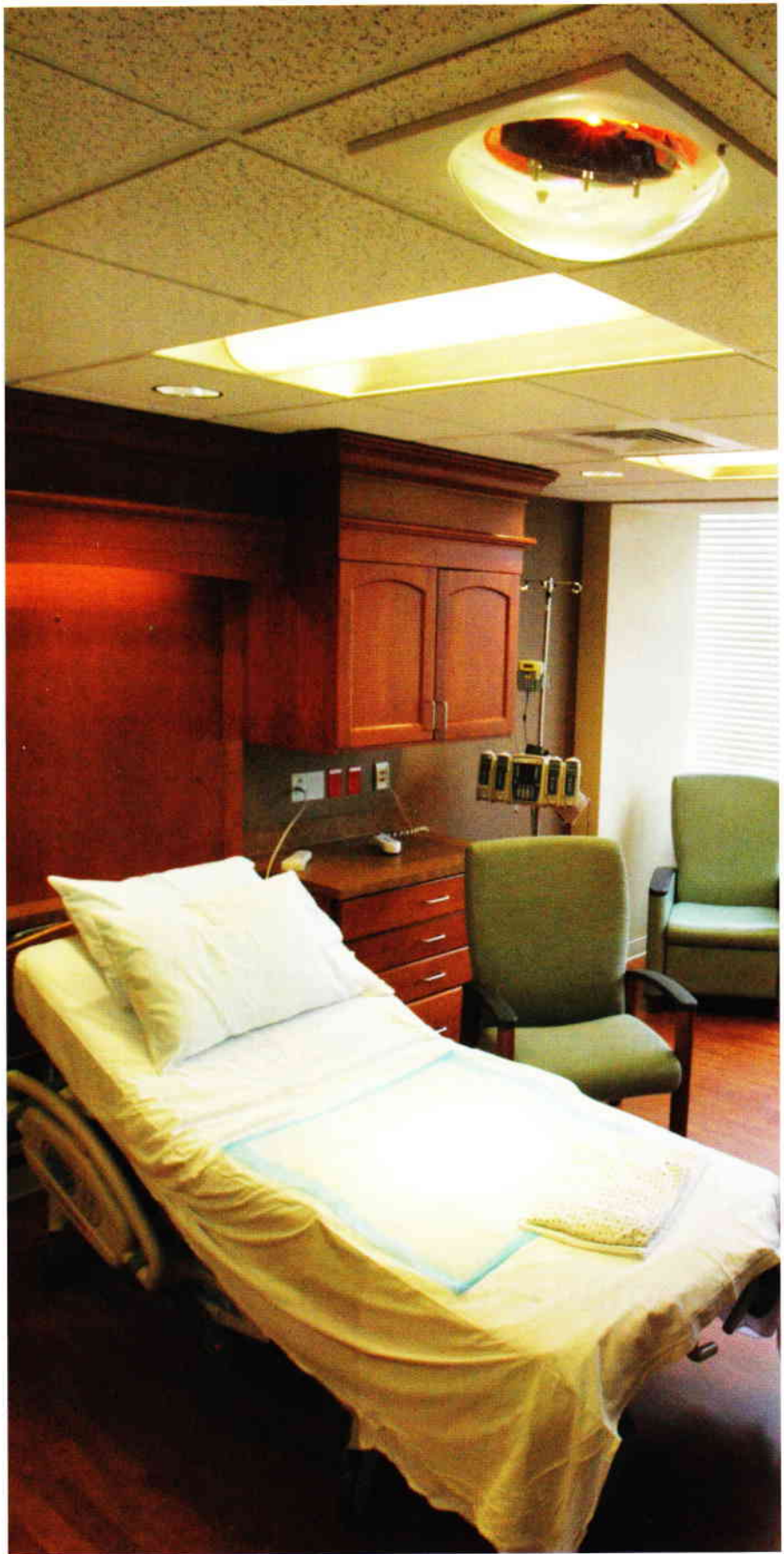
► **University of Louisville's James Graham Brown Cancer Center**, Breast Care Center, 529 S. Jackson St.: Even the floor is art at the University Hospital imaging center. Despite the luxury, this center sees more indigent patients than any other. If a patient hears bad news, the doctor may walk her across the lobby to the Mint Jubilee Cancer Resource Center, where cancer-information specialist Barbara Steele offers education and support.

## BABYING NEWBORNS

Moments after birth, a newborn's body temperature can plummet, destabilizing blood glucose, rabbiting the heart rate, stressing respiration and even increasing sensitivity to pain. That's why University Hospital, 530 S. Jackson St., introduced Kangaroo Care, a practice that puts the newborn in immediate contact with Mom's (and sometimes Dad's) skin.

With Mom as heater, baby can get on with her first job: Sleeping off delivery. When she does wake, she'll be alert and looking for food. "It's called the birth crawl," says Denise Barbier, a developmental-care therapist at University. "Baby will seek the nipple and attach and start its first feeding."

Kangaroo Care, introduced at University 16 years ago and later picked up by other regional hospitals, enhances bonding, strengthens the baby's immune system and reduces pain sensitivity for Mom and baby. Research suggests that nursing even protects against obesity later in life. As a result of Kangaroo Care, 66 percent of babies born at University are breast-fed — compared to



A remote-controlled spotlight in the labor-and-delivery area of Floyd Memorial Hospital in New Albany. Photo by Michael Hayman



A device that gives a very quick readout of the elements of a patient's blood at the Norton Women's Heart Center. Photo by Michael Clevenger

45 percent before the skin-to-skin care was introduced. That puts University well ahead of the state average of 48 percent, but still behind the national average of 74 percent. (Sixty-five percent of Indiana moms breast-feed.)

Kangaroo Care for full-term babies is only two years old at University Hospital, but it has been used there for infants in its neonatal intensive-care unit for 16 years. Kangaroo Care has been introduced at many other hospitals, as well.

## PREVENTING YOUR HEART ATTACK

Most people say "cancer" when they're asked to name the No. 1 killer of women. But they're wrong. Heart disease is Public Enemy No. 1 for women, killing six times more women than breast cancer.

The rate of sudden cardiac death of women in their 30s and 40s is increasing faster than the rate in men. Yet women are less likely to receive drugs to control cholesterol. After a heart problem, women are less likely to receive a pacemaker, or even aspirin. They're also less likely to undergo angioplasty or open-heart surgery following a heart attack. Here's how our local hospitals are responding:

► **Norton Women's Heart Center**, Norton Women's Pavilion at Norton Suburban Hospital, 4121 Dutchmans Lane: For \$40, you can have your cholesterol, triglycerides, fasting glucose and other indicators tested, as well as receive individual counseling. Armed with this information, women can advocate for themselves to receive the right preventive care, the kind men receive routinely. You don't need a doctor's referral, and your second visit is \$30. To make an appointment, call 629-1234.

► **University Hospital**, 530 S. Jackson St.: "There's definitely a difference in how diseases of the arteries present in women," says Dr. Rita Corum, an interventional cardiologist and director of the University Hospital Women's Cardiovascular Health Program.

"Medications don't behave the same way in women. Most studies of proven medications were done on men, and women are treated by extrapolation." That's why research into women's heart health is one of Corum's passions. She's part of a national study looking at the angina drug Ranolazine and its impact on women's life quality. She's also embarking on research that could uncover the well-known but puzzling connection between depression and heart disease. "I would like to find out if we can truly make a tangible difference in the quality of life for women."

► **Jewish Hospital**: "There is no explanation for the fact that 70 percent of heart surgery is performed in men when an equal number of women die of the same disease," says Dr. Mark Slaughter, director of the heart-transplant and mechanical-assist-device program at Jewish Hospital.

In fact, he says, when women have open-heart surgery, their mortality rate is 50 percent higher. During open-heart surgery, women are more likely than men to need a blood transfusion, and Slaughter's unpublished research shows that transfusions are related to worse outcomes for women.

"Here at Jewish Hospital, we've been working on minimally invasive surgical techniques that are a benefit particularly for women," he says. When ➤

open-heart surgery is unavoidable, "it's sort of modified to minimize a chance for a transfusion."

## A ONE-WOMAN MASTECTOMY SUPPORT GROUP

Regina DeCaro can talk bras — bras with lace, bras in color, bras in basic white, sculpted like twin rocket launchers. In the little room with the pink wing chair, she approaches her work like a tailor with fine fabric. "I'm a perfectionist. I want this to be something you are 100 percent happy with, so let's not settle," she tells her clients at Especially for Women, 1319 Missouri Ave. in Jeffersonville, Ind.

She's also an expert on what goes in the bra because DeCaro, manager of the Clark Memorial Hospital Wellness Center, is board-certified for mastectomy prosthesis-fitting. She brings practical enthusiasm to bear during an unsettling transition in a woman's life. She'll introduce women to breast forms that fit in special bras and forms that adhere to the body. You can even swim in them.

"The technology is changing all the time," DeCaro says. It's about more than appearance; prosthetic breast forms help with balance and posture. But it's the renewed silhouette for which clients are most grateful. Says DeCaro, "If I fit you, and I turn you around to the mirror, and you see yourself, it's like a total transformation. It's a flower blooming."

## HER HEALTH CARE 411

With medical misinformation just a click away on the Internet, area hospitals are stepping up to help you mine the diamonds from the gravel.

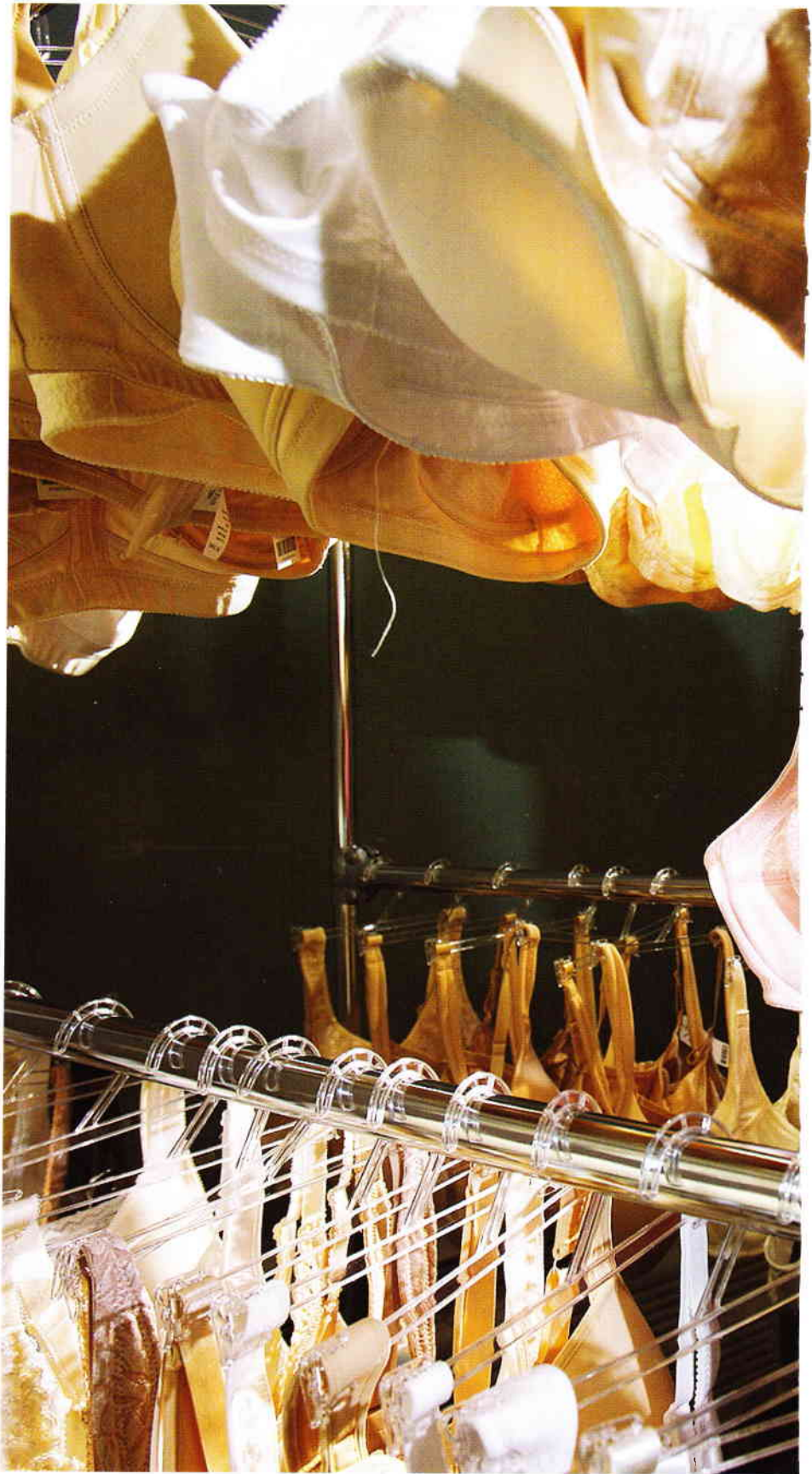
One standout in the effort is the Marshall Women's Health & Educational Center in the Norton Suburban Hospital Women's Pavilion, 4121 Dutchmans Lane. You need not be a Norton patient to drop into the resource facility from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays and ask for help or use the computers. But this is more than a free Internet connection. A resource person can advise you on the best sources for medical information, as well as help make sense of complex research. In the attractive setting, which looks more like a resort meeting room than a library, there are classes for every stage of life, from how to keep romance alive during menopause to how to meet the challenges of adolescence to the ABC's of beauty.

Center staff can also refer you to a number of support groups, or to the right medical specialist. Too busy to do your own research? Call 899-6300 and they'll do your research for you and mail you an answer or drop you an e-mail.

## BEATING THE BLUES

From the first time your sweet little girl locks herself in the closet wailing, "Why you don't love me anymore?" through the first menopausal meltdown, women are twice as likely to suffer from depression as men are.

"Girls and boys have the same amount of depression before girls start their periods and after women enter menopause. We know something happens in the menstrual cycle," says Joyce Spurgeon, the director of women's mental health at the newly inaugurated Depression Center at the U of L Health Care Outpatient Center, 401 E. Chestnut St.



Regina DeCaro, manager of the Wellness Center and Especially for Women at Clark Memorial Hospital in Jeffersonville, demonstrated bras that women can use following a mastectomy. Photo by Bill Luster

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Regina DeCaro, manager of the Wellness Center and Especially for Women at Clark Memorial Hospital in Jeffersonville, demonstrated bras that women can use following a mastectomy. Photo by Bill Luster



The psychiatrist says this focus on women's mental health is part of a growing recognition at the university that women's health concerns need a special focus. Her position was created in tandem with the creation of the new Depression Center, one of 16 centers around the nation united to improve depression care and research.

### **THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO SHRINK A STOMACH ...**

Research shows that 80 percent of all weight-loss patients are women. Although Baptist Hospital East, 4000 Kresge Way, entered the bariatric surgery game late — last August — its menu of services is the most extensive in the area.

Baptist services include gastric banding to create an egg-sized stomach; gastric sleeve surgery, which turns the stomach into a tube; gastric bypass, which bypasses most of the stomach and attaches the new reduced pouch about midway down the small intestine; and ROSE, for Restorative Obesity Surgery, Endoluminal. This incision-free surgery tightens stomachs that stretched after a gastric-bypass operation.

All Baptist East bariatric patients recover from their surgery in specially designed rooms in the snazzy, new Park Tower.

### **A PARTNER IN YOUR BREAST-CANCER BATTLE**

Say you learn that you have breast cancer. The almost-as-bad news is, you must immediately start managing life-altering decisions in one of the most complex areas of medical treatment — while almost overwhelmed by anger or fear. Time to meet your patient navigator. Norton Health Care has perhaps the most comprehensive program to help patients make their way through the thicket of options.

Patients need not go to Norton hospitals to be eligible for the free service. These registered nurses partner with you almost from the moment of diagnosis. They'll explain your pathology reports and help you understand treatment recommendations. They can help you prepare for your doctor appointments or talk to you afterwards. They'll help you find transportation and child care, work with you on insurance problems, and aid in the hunt for financial aid. They'll hang in as long as you need them, and get you in touch with the right people, whether it's a genetic counselor or a behavioral oncologist. They'll direct you to Norton's free massage therapy (your caregiver can have a massage, too), art therapy, music therapy, nutritional counseling and the three cancer-resource centers at Norton Suburban, Audubon and downtown.

To find a cancer navigator, call (877) 782-7327.

### **MAKING BABIES POSSIBLE**

They're making babies at University Hospital — more than 1,300 so far at the region's only hospital-affiliated fertility clinic.

The Fertility Center at the Health Care Outpatient Center, 401 E. Chestnut St., was founded a little more than a decade after the birth of the world's first "test tube baby." Today, the center's research is helping women preserve fertility — especially important with some cancer treatments — via the experimental freezing of ovarian tissue. Eventually the procedure could save even a child's immature ovaries.

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In another experimental protocol, women with polycystic ovarian syndrome, whose eggs don't develop properly, are trying a procedure that matures eggs in the laboratory.

Research will soon allow women to slow their biological clocks by freezing eggs. "Women under 35 have a 50-50 chance of a live birth on an initial attempt of in-vitro fertilization," says Dr. Steven Nakajima of the Fertility Center. "That figure goes down after age 35. By age 40, women usually can't expect higher than a 25 percent success rate."

## THERE'S THE RUB

It's one thing to say you're improving "quality of life"; the massage therapists at Floyd Memorial Hospital in New Albany, Ind., are out to prove it. They're measuring whether weekly massage reduces the fatigue and insomnia commonly associated with radiation therapy in breast-cancer patients.

In the study, 30 patients will be randomly selected to receive massage therapy, and 20 will act as the control group and go without. Blood gathered before and after treatment will be tested for a marker of inflammation known as interleukin 6, and each patient will fill out a questionnaire about how she feels. The hope is that patients will report less fatigue and insomnia, and the improvement will be accompanied by a decrease in inflammatory markers, said Krystal Angevine, Floyd research grants coordinator.

Says Angevine, "They're getting a lot of good results with cure rates; now we want to make the quality of life better."

## WHEN YOUR 10-YEAR-OLD NEEDS A GYNECOLOGIST

Twelve is the average age of onset for menstruation, and girls as young as 7 or 8 show signs of puberty — yet gynecologists typically won't see patients younger than 16.

Louisville has one pediatric gynecologist, Dr. Paige Hertweck, who practices in the University of Louisville Health Care Outpatient Center, at the corner of Chestnut and Preston streets, and at Kosair Children's Hospital.

Hertweck can help youngsters deal with painful or heavy periods or other reproductive-tract issues. She also cares for 7-, 8- and 9-year-olds who appear to be entering puberty. Says Hertweck, "We need to look into those kids to see if they're going to develop polycystic ovarian syndrome, or to see if there's some kind of thyroid problem."

## INCONTINENCE? DO WE EVEN HAVE TO TALK ABOUT THIS?

Absolutely.

Debby Bloyd, a nurse practitioner at the University Hospital Incontinence Center, in the Health Care Outpatient Center, remembers the patient who wept when she realized there was a nonsurgical solution for her prolapsed uterus — a solution she had needed for 20 years.

Bloyd also helps women troubled by urge incontinence, the urgent and uncontrollable need to urinate, or by stress incontinence, urine leakage caused by coughing, laughing or exercise.

Mary Plunkett, doctor of physical therapy at the Baptist East Medical Pavilion, uses biofeedback, behavior modification, progressive pelvic-floor exercises and other means to help women control stress incontinence or urge incontinence. She can also intervene when pelvic pain is a problem and help women prevent complete prolapse, when pelvic organs change positions.

## THIS DOESN'T LOOK LIKE A HOSPITAL ROOM ...

Colleagues are coming for a working lunch. You've booked the conference room and arranged for the menu. All that remains is to decide whether to put on a suit or wear your jammies.

About the only downside to staying in Jewish Hospital's Trager Pavilion — with its quiet elegance, hairdresser on call and conference room that patients can use — is that you have to have a medical reason to be there.

The luxury hospital wing on the 14<sup>th</sup> floor of the Rudd Heart & Lung Center, 201 Abraham Flexner Way, could put a few high-end hotels to shame.

The service — an additional \$100 a night for one of the 12 rooms — includes a gourmet menu for every meal, with selections like grilled petite filet and baby pork riblet. Meals for you and a guest are served on china from a white-tablecloth-covered cart and include a glass of wine if your doctor allows.

Plastic-surgery patients are automatically sent to Trager to enjoy the privacy, peace and pampering. (About 80 percent of Trager patients are women.)

## NO MEN ALLOWED

Most area hospitals have women-only wards, but only Baptist Hospital East, 4000 Kresge Way, has 6 Park Tower — and it looks as elegant as the address sounds.

The Tower is an impressive place, with massive bowl chandeliers, gleaming floors

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and two cafes. The sixth floor holds 24 private rooms open to any female patient, with priority given to mastectomy, hysterectomy and plastic-surgery patients. Women who lose their babies are also transferred here, and their care requires a special touch: "This staff has the additional education," says Pam Kayrouz, director of nursing for Women and Children's Services. "They will stand and cry with the patients."

### VERY SPECIAL DELIVERIES

You enter the pampered class when you deliver a baby in any one of the region's labor and delivery wards. Furnishings are beautiful. Color schemes are soothing. Nasty medical monitors are — mostly — hidden. Even baby's crib looks like something you might serve drinks from under different circumstances. Here are a few tidbits to consider when deciding where you'd like your baby to make her debut.

► **Clark Memorial Hospital:** This is the only hospital in the region that works with midwives. It advertises the expectant mom's ability to create an individualized birthing plan. Two of its labor-and-delivery suites include big tubs to soak in during labor. The entire department was renovated in December 2005. The new rooms include flat-screen televisions.

► **University Hospital:** Birthing suites feature dark-wood furniture and elegant cream wallpaper. But it's the presence of a neonatal intensive-care facility that really makes this department special. Women who must be hospitalized for an extended period before labor stay in a special unit designed to keep boredom at bay, with bedside laptops available, flat-screen televisions, movie nights and even cooking demonstrations. When a preterm baby is finally ready to leave the NICU nest, there's a family room where parents can stay for a night or two while they get the hang of their little one's needs.

► **Floyd Memorial Hospital:** The most recently renovated of the region's labor-and-delivery sections, the fourth-floor area — with big windows and furniture you might like in your bedroom — opened for business in December. The rooms are almost identical to those at Clark, and, just as at Clark, two of the rooms have labor soaking tubs, and all have flat-screen televisions. The hospital brags that moms in labor can get up and walk around between contractions, while their babies are monitored remotely by the staff.

► **Norton Suburban and Norton Hospital downtown:** Norton delivers more babies than any other hospital in the state and cares for some of the region's

most fragile babies in its neonatal intensive-care unit.

### WEEKEND (FEMALE) WARRIORS

Forget poor Achilles and his heel. If the Greek hero of the Trojan War had been a woman, we'd refer to our worst flaw as our Achilles knee. Women are plagued with knee problems, which can cut your activity level drastically.

Dr. Kittie George says many women, even those who confine workouts to neighborhood strolls, develop what she calls patella femoral stress syndrome. In other words, the front of their knees aches.

"It encompasses a lot of causes. It's more common in women than men, probably because of a little imbalance," she says. Her solution: a brace, physical therapy and something for the pain so you can work out the problem.

The hard-chargers among us may suffer from a different knee problem. Dr. Stacie Grossfield, another Baptist orthopedic surgeon, says women college soccer players, for instance, are eight times more likely to tear the anterior cruciate ligament in the knee than men are. "It's like a female disease," she says. "We're not exactly sure why."

When this knee-stabilizing ligament tears, some doctors will use a portion of the patella tendon to replace it. But Grossfield won't. The reasons are two-fold: First, the aforementioned risk of patella stress syndrome in women, and the size of the scar. She uses hamstring tendon, which creates a 1-inch scar, about half as long as the scar from taking a patellar tendon.

Dr. Jessica Stumbo, sports-medicine specialist at the Frazier Rehab and Neuroscience Institute, affiliated with Jewish Hospital and St. Mary's HealthCare, says women can reduce their risk of ACL tears. "Our big focus is on biomechanics," Stumbo says. "When girls jump and land, they predispose themselves to tearing the ACL. Girls land straight up and kind of knock-kneed."

Training to change that landing pattern, as well as strengthening core muscles, reduces the chance of injury, she says. If you go to this center, close to the University of Louisville at 220 Abraham Flexner Way, you'll be working with the go-to team for the elite women athletes at the university.

*Jenni Laidman, an alumnus of the Knight Science Journalism Fellowship program at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has written about medicine, science and health for nearly two decades. Her work has been featured in Reader's Digest and the Harvard Health Letter, as well as in various newspapers and magazines.*