

# Emerson Hospital

## A Milestone in Cancer Care

Bethke Cancer Center  
marks a decade of progress  
and accomplishment

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PULLOUT  
HEALTH  
CALENDAR  
INSIDE

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diabetes center  
opens

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and technology  
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helpful tips on flu,  
sports injuries and  
asthma

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For more information on care at Emerson Hospital, call the Physician Referral Line 877-9-EMERSON (877-936-3776) or visit the hospital's web site at [www.emersonhospital.org](http://www.emersonhospital.org).



Andrea R. Rizzo, MD  
Internal Medicine

### Why is it important to get a flu shot?

The flu is caused by viruses that spread easily, predominantly during the fall and winter. Since the viruses change each year, there's no immunity from year to year. Some 30,000 Americans die annually from the flu and from complications like bacterial pneumonia.

The most effective preventive measure is a flu shot, available starting in October. Shots are recommended for everyone from the age of six months who has a serious chronic illness; for all children age six months to five years, regardless of their health; for all caretakers of children six months to five years; for everyone over 65; for healthcare workers, and for pregnant women. If vaccine is available, everyone should get a flu shot. It is important to note that flu shots do not cause the flu.

Flu symptoms include headache, achiness, fever, cough and, sometimes, sore throat, usually lasting five to seven days. If shortness of breath, chest pain, severe headache or high fever occur, you should contact your doctor.

*For information on flu shots, contact your primary care provider, call 978-287-3086, or visit the hospital's web site at [www.emersonhospital.org](http://www.emersonhospital.org).*



Dean C. Howard, MD  
Orthopedic Surgery

### How can injuries be avoided when playing contact sports like football and basketball?

Football and basketball are transitional sports that involve sharp changes in direction and sudden bursts of acceleration and deceleration. If your body is not used to this, you are at risk for an injury—a muscle strain, ligament sprain or an overuse injury such as tendon inflammation or tendonitis. You can minimize your risk by committing to a gradual pre-season physical conditioning program that is appropriate for your sport and to a good stretching program that will help you stay flexible. Games and training sessions should be preceded by warm-up exercises and a stretching routine.

Ankle injuries are more common than knee injuries, but knee problems are often more serious. Many ankle sprains resolve on their own, but if you can't put weight on the leg or the ankle feels unstable, you should be evaluated by a physician. Unless symptoms resolve quickly, knee injuries are more likely to need an orthopedic consultation.



Terese C. Hammond, MD  
Pulmonary/Critical Care Medicine

### What are the options for someone who has regular asthma attacks?

Many patients are accustomed to thinking of asthma in terms of immediate gratifications—a problem to be handled with quick-fix treatment when attacks occur. Bronchodilators, which open up airways, are often effective at resolving acute asthmatic episodes.

However, there are now medicines available that can prevent asthma attacks altogether in most patients. They include inhaled corticosteroids that deliver medication directly to the airway and produce minimal side effects. The key is to take them daily, even when everything seems fine. Patients with mild, persistent asthma always have a low level of inflammation present, just waiting for a catalyst to trigger an episode. The goal of these inhaled corticosteroids is to lessen inflammation.

In my opinion, asthma patients who experience daytime attacks at least twice a week or nighttime attacks at least twice a month should see their primary care physician or an asthma specialist to discuss medication options.

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If you would prefer not to receive such mailings in the future, please let us know by calling 978-287-3085 or send an email to [pr@emersonhosp.org](mailto:pr@emersonhosp.org).

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The information included here is intended to educate readers about health issues, but it is not a substitute for consultation with a personal physician.

*The mission of Emerson Hospital is to deliver the highest quality, safest and most cost-efficient care to our patients and to maintain a professional and respectful environment for all members of the Emerson Hospital community.*



## Phase I construction is complete, and new building is taking shape

*Surgery patients are already benefiting from expansion*

Major portions of the Clough Surgical Center opened this summer, and the West Building is taking shape.



As the summer draws to a close, so has phase I construction on Emerson's project to upgrade and expand surgery, the Birthing Center and radiology services. Patients are already benefiting from the newly opened clinical areas.

"By late July, patients were coming to the new Clough Surgical Center for their pre-surgical testing visits," reports Joseph Piechocki, vice president of administrative and clinical services. "The rest of the surgical center, including the pre-surgical and post-surgical areas, was recently opened. Patients and family members are giving the center high marks for comfort and privacy." The expansion includes three state-of-the-art surgical suites, which are scheduled for completion in March 2008. At that point, surgery patients will come and go through a dedicated entrance rather than the main lobby.

The new West Building—86,000 square feet of new or renovated space—is rapidly taking shape. By winter, interventional radiology staff will move into a versatile new suite equipped for image-guided diagnostic procedures and treatments. Also, the Birthing Center will open a suite of private postpartum rooms this winter. The multi-year expansion project is scheduled for completion in summer 2008, when the rest of the Birthing Center's private rooms will be done.

Community members continue to show their support for the major expansion at Emerson. The hospital's fundraising campaign surpassed \$5 million when Jack and Laura Milton, Northborough residents and long-time friends of Emerson Hospital, made a \$500,000 gift that will name a suite of operating rooms after Robert Cantu, MD, chairman of surgery.