



Critical Maternity Care, Close to Home

Nothing about Brigitte Smith's two pregnancies even hinted of potential trouble. When she tested positive during her first pregnancy for Group B strep (GBS)—a common bacteria carried by up to 30 percent of women without any health effects—it was still no cause for alarm.

As a precautionary measure against transmission of the bacteria to her newborn, Brigitte was given a dose of antibiotics before delivering her son Lukas in 2009.

But that 17-hour labor bore no resemblance to the arrival of Smith's daughter Morgan last year.

"I delivered Morgan within a half-hour of arriving at Southwest General," Smith says. "There was no time to get the antibiotics."

Morgan arrived seemingly healthy, but 12 hours later, nurses detected a heart murmur. Further examination revealed that Morgan had contracted GBS infection during delivery.

A neonatologist from University Hospital's Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital arrived immediately to begin treatment. He offered the Smiths the choice of transferring

Southwest General's Security Blanket for Your Bundle of Joy Includes:

- 24-hour access to an obstetrician/gynecologist and anesthesiologists.
- Two nurses present at every delivery—one for mom and one for baby.
- Access to Newborn Home Visits from Home Health Services for first-time moms.
- Certified lactation consultants.
- Experienced pediatricians on the Medical Staff at Southwest General.
- Access to Midwife Services.
- Constant Care Nursery for babies who need closer attention.

to Rainbow's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) or staying at Southwest General.

"I asked the doctor, 'Can Southwest General give Morgan everything she needs?'" says Brigitte. "He said 'yes.'"

Nancy Crow, nurse manager of Maternity Services at Southwest General, gives mothers similar reassurances when they have manageable complications.

"Because of our partnership with University Hospitals, we have access to highly skilled neonatologists and neonatal nurse practitioners around the clock," Crow says. "In a case like Morgan's, a family can stay close to home and still get the same quality of care they would experience at Rainbow."

Crow and her team cared for Morgan in an area known as the "Constant Care Nursery" while she received antibiotic treatment, overseen by a neonatologist. Brigitte was able to stay overnight at the hospital with Morgan and had as much access as she wanted to nurse and cuddle with her daughter. Morgan went home in good health and has suffered no long-term effects from her illness. For that, Brigitte credits the care she received at Southwest General.

"It made me very comfortable that they had so many years of experience with neonatologists," she says. "They were so good, why would I have wanted to go somewhere else?" ■