



McAlister Women's Health Center

Southern California's newest dedicated space for women's special medical needs

Encompassing the entire third floor of the new Howard Keck Center, the McAlister Women's Health Center has been designed to offer comfort and privacy while providing exceptional care by leading women's healthcare specialists.

"We designed the inpatient unit with three distinct areas—labor, delivery and recovery; postpartum; and women's services," said Bo Thordarson, MD, a board-certified obstetrician/gynecologist at Saint John's Health Center who was involved in the planning of the new unit. "By consolidating areas for specific needs, we've improved navigation and staff efficiency. The rooms in each area are configured in a rectangular pattern around a central nursing core, facilitating easy visitor greeting while preserving patient privacy."

The McAlister Women's Health Center features 12 large, luxurious birthing suites where women can enjoy a home-like environment while having access to academic-level medical expertise and equipment. Each suite is beautifully appointed with wood-tone cabinetry, comforting décor, a 42-inch television, wireless Internet connectivity and a daybed for overnight guests. A large window fills the suite with natural light, contributing to the feeling of spaciousness.

Two fully equipped operating rooms for C-sections have been positioned with easy access to the Irene Dunne Guild Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), now doubled in size to 12 beds. For newborns requiring extra medical attention, the Level II NICU offers clinically advanced care by renowned specialists in a warm, supportive environment. Equipped with the latest technology, the Saint John's NICU provides babies with around-the-clock, special-needs care from experienced neonatologists, neonatal nurses and pediatric respiratory therapists.

For healthy babies, rooming in with mothers is encouraged to support bonding and breastfeeding. Should those babies at any point require minor procedures or temporary monitoring, they are attended to in the nearby Maria Shriver Nursery.

Once mothers and babies are stabilized, they move into the 20-bed postpartum area for their final stay before release. Four of these rooms have been specially outfitted with fetal monitoring equipment to accommodate women with high-risk pregnancies, who may be required to have a prolonged stay in the unit while they are followed by their obstetricians and/or perinatologists.

In a third and separate area of the unit, 15 beds have been set aside for women recuperating from gynecological and other surgeries. "Everything related to women's health happens on one floor now," Dr. Thordarson said. "The new unit is much more comfortable and offers more privacy and constant support to women in a technologically advanced environment."

While hospitalized, women are cared for by Saint John's renowned, clinically advanced staff of gynecologists, obstetricians, perinatologists, neonatologists and nurses. "Our compassionate caring is not limited to inpatients," said Dr. Thordarson. "We also have a Women's Health Panel composed of primary care physicians and specialists, who are available to provide age-specific screening exams for women 18 years and older. Saint John's is dedicated to promoting wellness as well as providing exceptional birthing and surgical care."

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For more information about the unit, visit www.newstjohns.org. ■