MERCY’S OB EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT AND COUNT THE KICKS APP
SAVE A BABY’S LIFE

Emily Eekhoff never expected a pregnancy app on her phone would save her baby’s life. Count the Kicks, a public health awareness campaign started in 2009 by five Greater Des Moines mothers who each had lost a baby girl to stillbirth or infant death, provides a free app for mothers to use to count their baby’s kicks during the third trimester of pregnancy.

Emily used the app daily to track her baby’s movements. On May 30, at 33 weeks and 5 days, her baby’s movements slowed down. She and husband Jeremy were planning to drive to Mason City that evening to see their new nephew when she mentioned the baby hadn’t been very active that day. Jeremy urged her to call her OB, who then directed her to go to the Obstetric Emergency Department (OB ED) at Mercy. After doing fetal monitoring and an ultrasound, it was determined the baby was in duress with the umbilical cord wrapped around her neck three times. Emily had an emergency cesarean section and Baby Ruby entered the world. She spent 20 days in the neonatal intensive care unit at Mercy. On July 20, Ruby, her parents and brother Liam came back to Mercy to share their story with local media.

Mercy has been a supporter of Count the Kicks since it started in 2009. The app launched in 2013, and has been downloaded by moms throughout the U.S., as well as Russia, the South Pacific and the Middle East to monitor their babies’ movement. In Iowa alone, education and promotion about Count the Kicks has helped reduce the stillbirth rate by 26 percent, while the rates in the rest of the country have remained stagnant.

“We’re gaining about 3,000 new app users each month,” says Emily Price, executive director of Count the Kicks. “We hear stories from families all across the country whose babies were saved because mom knew the importance of counting kicks. Moms will write us and say ‘if I had not been counting my kicks and noticed a problem, my child would not be here today.’”

Since implementing the OB ED in November 2016, Mercy has had more than 2,500 visits by pregnant mothers needing emergency care. Dr. Neil Mandsager, maternal-fetal medicine physician at Mercy’s Perinatal Center of Iowa, has been an advocate of the OB ED and providing this unique service in central Iowa.

“The OB ED at Mercy is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year,” says Dr. Mandsager. “Patients presenting here are seen by a physician within 30 minutes of arrival. We work in conjunction with the OB practices in Des Moines, so there is communication between the OB ED staff and a mother’s OB provider. It’s just another way Mercy provides a higher level of maternal-fetal care, and it has saved many babies, including Ruby.”

For more about Count the Kicks, visit www.countthekicks.org. To learn more about Mercy’s OB ED, visit mercy.dm/obed.

An app and the Mercy OB ED saved baby Ruby Eekhoff. Pictured in front (l-r): Emily, Liam, Jeremy and Ruby Eekhoff. Pictured in back (l-r): Emily Price, executive director of Count the Kicks; Dr. Neil Mandsager, maternal-fetal medicine physician, Mercy’s Perinatal Center of Iowa; and Lezlie Mestdagh, outreach coordinator of Count the Kicks.
CELEBRATING SAFETY COACHES

Safety is important in everything we do at Mercy! Our Safety Coaches receive special training to provide peer checking and peer coaching in and outside of their departments, and coaches make observations on and encourage use of our error prevention techniques to provide a safe environment for our patients and staff. The group meets monthly to review observations, examples of coaching, share lessons learned and review initiatives from the SafetyFirst Top 10 List.

The third annual safety coach recognition events followed the theme “We Celebrate You” and highlighted and praised the program’s coaches and successes. Thank you to all of the safety coaches for their dedication to keeping our patients and staff safe by putting SafetyFirst. You are helping us move toward high reliability and a strong culture of safety!

THANKS
FOR CREATING A REMARKABLE (AND SAFE) MERCY EXPERIENCE!

Sara Appletoft
Swapna Aurora
Jessica Bair
Kari Barker
Stevi Breitman
Megan Brodie
Laura Brubaker
Kailey Buhman
Kerrie Bunnell
Cassidie Burk
Angie Carroll
Cory Castaner
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Jeanie Stickman
Bill Stirler
Brenda Sullivan
Sarah Swalla
Beckye Tate
Keith Wachter
Lisa Walker
Kelly Winters
Cydney Wolf
Roy Young

WHAT’S UP?

MRSA PRECAUTIONS TO BE DISCONTINUED

In accordance with national trends, Mercy Medical Center will be discontinuing contact isolation for patients identified with MRSA (Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus) and VRE (Vancomycin Resistant Enterococcus) effective Monday, July 10. This includes infected as well as colonized patients and applies to both Mercy central campus and Mercy West Lakes. Clearance cultures for MRSA and VRE will no longer be required.

Contact precautions will remain in effect for patients with C.diff and MDR-GN (Clostridium difficile, multi-drug-resistant Gram negative organisms respectively).

Essential components for the success of this change are meticulous and consistent hand hygiene practices as well as the use of two percent chlorhexidine gluconate (CHG) bathing for all of our patients.

Please review the PowerPoint presentation, MRSA.VRE Practice Change, and address any further questions or concerns you may have to the Infection Prevention Department at (515) 247-4457.

CONTACT US

The Bulletin is published weekly for staff and friends of Mercy Medical Center, 1111 6th Ave., Des Moines, Iowa 50314-2611

If you are interested in submitting information to be printed in the Bulletin, send it to PR and Marketing or call 515-247-3050.

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