Kane and Marissa share their birth experience

Should you use the snooze button?

What is palliative care?
Welcome

A Letter from the President

Did you know the (unauthenticated) odds of finding a pearl in an oyster are 1 in 12,000? The odds of winning a Powerball jackpot, 1 in 292,000,000; being struck by lightning, 1 in 114,195; being attacked by a shark, 1 in 3,748,067 and being audited by the IRS (much better) at 1 in 160. While the likelihood of something happening obviously depends on our specific behaviors and circumstances, odds can be an interesting and often staggering phenomenon.

The odds of certain health-related outcomes are also interesting and concerning. I have shared previously that 1 in 3 of us will experience a cancer diagnosis in our lifetime, and I was surprised to learn that about 1 in 4 expecting mothers and families will experience some kind of loss related to their pregnancy. According to the March of Dimes, 10 to 15% of recognized pregnancies end in miscarriage, and stillbirth occurs in about 1 in 100 pregnancies. That is 24,000 babies each year. Staggering.

MercyOne Dubuque is well-known for the wonderful care we provide in our birth center, with an extraordinary team that works collaboratively with families throughout their pregnancy and birth experience. While the vast majority of births go well and are truly joyous occasions, we are proud to be among (if not) the first hospital in the country to offer a new and critically needed service for families experiencing a loss of their baby through miscarriage, stillbirth or infant death. A birthing and bereavement suite will be available at MercyOne Dubuque this summer, offering grieving families a warm and peaceful environment where they can say ‘hello’ and ‘good-bye’ to their babies with the support of a loving team by their side. We are overwhelmed by the positive response to this service concept and look forward to bringing it to families in eastern Iowa and the tri-states very soon.

In addition to the new birthing and bereavement suite in our birth center, we are also excited about the excellent perinatal care we provide to women and families in our newly renovated MercyOne Dubuque Maternal Health Clinic (formerly, the Hillcrest Mercy Maternal Health Clinic), located in the Professional Arts Plaza at MercyOne Dubuque. Ensuring access for all, regardless of one’s financial status, is a core value and central to our mission. It is exemplified at the MercyOne Dubuque Maternal Health Clinic where we have a beautiful new space and a team dedicated to the highest standards of well-coordinated care for moms, babies and their families.

At MercyOne, we work tirelessly to meet your needs and to exceed your expectations. While some odds are a bad bet, you can count on us 100% of the time to be there for you, to put families first, no matter the circumstances. MercyOne. Your best life. Our one purpose.
Use or Lose the Snooze?

It’s Monday morning and the alarm goes off. You need just 10 more minutes of sleep, so you hit the snooze button. And maybe you need 10 more when it goes off again. Is this really how you should start your day?

The National Sleep Foundation says, “No way.”

Why: Those extra minutes aren’t good quality sleep because you’re not getting enough time to finish a complete sleep cycle, and so you’ll end up feeling way more groggy instead of rested.

BREAK THE SNOOZE HABIT

- Set your alarm for the time you’re actually going to get up, i.e., the last snooze. Skip the snooze and get out of bed when the alarm goes off.

- If the snooze button is still too tempting, move your alarm across the room so that you’re required to get out of bed to turn it off.

- Maintain a consistent schedule for going to bed and rising, even on weekends. This will help set your body’s circadian (sleep/wake) rhythm.

- If you’re still struggling to get out of bed in the morning, start going to bed earlier so that you can achieve 7 to 9 hours of quality sleep.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Using the snooze button does more harm than good. Skip the snooze button and work on getting better quality sleep.

More than a third of American adults hit the snooze button at least three times each morning.

Source: Health.com
“Everyone’s experience is unique, and the norm is that there isn’t a norm. We need to remember to not compare ourselves.”

It’s advice that can be applied to so many situations, but in this instance, Marissa Hoffmann is referring to her birth experience—a birth experience that didn’t go the way she and her husband expected; an experience that was filled with heartache before joy. And one that many can relate to.

Marissa and Kane knew early in their relationship that they wanted children, and it wasn’t long into their marriage when they were ready to begin their family. When Marissa wasn’t becoming pregnant, her doctor was able to pinpoint the reason. It was already a challenging start to their experience, so they were thrilled when they found out that Marissa was expecting. They soon started preparing the nursery and making plans, and Marissa began thinking about the help she would need at her shop, The Midwest Girl.

“And then our world came crashing down,” Marissa recalls. “It just never crossed my mind that we would have a miscarriage.”

The percentage of early pregnancy loss is high. According to the March of Dimes, for women who know they’re pregnant, about 10 to 15 percent end in miscarriage. But the true percentage of miscarriage may be closer to half of all pregnancies—the exact number is unknown because a miscarriage may happen before a woman knows she’s pregnant.
“Miscarriage and fetal loss is the hardest part of the job of an OB/GYN. Diagnosing this for women never gets easier,” says Marissa’s physician, Dr. Lisa Kramer, MD, of Medical Associates Clinic. “After a diagnosis we often discuss options, but sometimes the shock can be so great that parents aren’t ready to discuss the next step, so we give them time to process and grieve before we walk the next step together. This loss is like any loss – very painful and present in a mother’s heart forever.”

Dr. Kramer says that miscarriage can often feel like a silent struggle, and so she encourages parents to seek support through their loved ones and through groups such as SHARE or No Foot Too Small, to help work through their complex emotions.

As a small business owner, Marissa has a large and loyal following on social media. She has built relationships with her customers and has shared many aspects of her life with them, and they share with her as well. Marissa cherishes these relationships. So, when the time was right, she decided to also share their loss.

“I was hesitant at first about her opening up publicly,” admits Kane. “It’s just not talked about. But once she did, other people opened up too and reacted with so much support.”

Marissa says it was scary to share their story, but doing so created an opportunity to connect with others. “It was humbling how many women reached out and shared their own stories. I felt less alone. I had women say, ‘It happened with my first pregnancy and now I have three children.’ It definitely gave me hope, but in the same token, there is nothing in that moment that can make you feel better, and I learned that too. It just takes time.”

In June 2018, Marissa and Kane learned they were once again expecting. Ultrasounds were performed serially to watch for normal development, which also served as a reassurance to Marissa and Kane.

“Marissa was, understandably, very cautious and anxious, as many women are after dealing with a prior loss,” Dr. Kramer recalls. “We made it to 12 weeks and took a deep breath of relief and joy. Her pregnancy was lovely and I really enjoyed celebrating each milestone with them.”

“Dr. Kramer was a Godsend, and I felt so much support from everyone at Medical Associates,” Marissa says. “I knew I could call them any time I had a question or concern.”

Marissa and Kane did not find out the gender of their baby, and in February 2019, she delivered a healthy baby girl at MercyOne. Nellie was born at 1:58 a.m. and weighed 7 pounds and 7 ounces. Marissa recalls those first moments together, just the three of them, bonding as a new family.

“I think a lot of people were surprised that we didn’t find out the gender. But just having that time together before calling our family, when we were the only ones who knew it was a girl, it was just very special.”

Marissa also remarks on another struggle she didn’t anticipate: breastfeeding.

“That was really important to me, but I didn’t realize how hard it was going to be. I am so grateful for the lactation nurses, Amy and Tara. If we wouldn’t have had them in the hospital and the lactation support after, I don’t think we would have been able to stick with it. They’ve been wonderful. We’re still working on it, and now I’ve learned that nearly everyone has a struggle with it—I don’t think it’s easy for anyone.”

Marissa and Kane are happily adjusting to their new routine and growing more confident as parents. The love in their eyes is evident as they gaze upon Nellie and reflect on who she looks like and the personality she’s developing.

“Her smiles are coming more often, and they’re heart melting,” Kane admires.

It hasn’t been an easy journey, but both Marissa and Kane hope their experience can help others.

“There are just so many relatable stories and my hope is that by sharing our story, people will know it’s okay to talk about theirs, too. If you have a miscarriage, you’re not alone. You’ll have support, and it’s important for women to reach out so they don’t feel alone or isolated,” Marissa says. “And as hard as the days after will be, try to stay optimistic and trust your doctors. Dr. Kramer will always have a special place in our hearts because she gave us so much hope during the months of worry and uncertainty. There are so many things that she said to me throughout our journey that have stuck with me, and stuck with Kane. She was wonderful.”
Join us at the Farmers’ Market

The Dubuque Farmers’ Market is in full swing. Stop by our tent to meet our crew and learn about the following topics and services:

- **June 8** Home Medical Equipment
- **July 20**—MercyOne Pharmacy
- **August 24** Cancer and Palliative Care
- **September 7**—Nutrition
- **October 12**—AirCare 3

MercyOne Dubuque Cancer Center Update

The excitement around the construction of the new MercyOne Dubuque Cancer Center continues to build as the construction phase has become more evident in recent months. Since the groundbreaking in November 2018, most of the work was completed underground, such as moving utilities and building infrastructure. However, the landscape really started changing in February with the arrival of cranes to drill the foundation piers. These 112 piers are 35 feet deep and were completed March 21. In April, we started to see the building rise out of the ground, adding more excitement.

The building has not been limited to the physical structure. In January, our first oncology nurse navigator was hired. This specialized nurse works with patients to coordinate care across the spectrum of cancer services, serving as a consistent and continuous contact for patients. We have also been working with Medical Associates Clinic to hire a radiation oncologist, and that search has been very promising. Through the summer and fall, we will begin advertising and interviewing for the other positions that will be required in the new radiation oncology department.

(Above) March 12, 2019: Conlon places the grade beam retaining wall for the first concrete pour.
**Q&A**

**Q: What is palliative care?**

A: Palliative care is a medical specialty for people with a serious illness, focused on providing relief from the symptoms and improving quality of life for you and your family. Serious illness may include, but is not limited to, advanced heart disease (e.g., heart failure), lung disease, cancer, kidney failure, Parkinson’s, or stroke with serious impairment.

The MercyOne palliative care team works with you, your family and your doctors to create a plan of care to support you through treatment at any stage of your medical condition. We advocate, listen, support and educate you and your family in an effort to empower you to make informed decisions. We will ensure that your wishes, goals and choices are identified, respected and honored.

**Q: Who is on the palliative care team, and how can I become a patient?**

A: MercyOne’s palliative care team includes a specially trained nurse practitioner, nurse and social worker who work with your existing providers. Team members can visit you when you are in the hospital or you can call to make an appointment at our outpatient clinic, located at MercyOne Dubuque Medical Center.

For more information about palliative care, visit www.mercyone.org/dubuque/palliative-care.

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**Better Burrito Bowl**

**Ingredients**

- 1 pound boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 2 tablespoons reduced sodium taco seasoning
- 3 tablespoons white flour
- 2 tablespoons butter (or olive oil)
- 1 can southwestern corn, drained
- 1 can black beans (no added salt), drained and rinsed
- 4 cups cauliflower crumbles
- 3 tablespoon fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 bag shredded lettuce
- 3 large limes
- 10–ounce store bought pico de gallo
- ½ cup plain Greek yogurt

**Directions**

**Chicken** — Slice chicken breasts in half and sprinkle with pepper. Combine the taco seasoning and flour. Generously dredge the chicken breasts in this mixture.

Warm a large, non-stick (12-inch) skillet to medium-high heat. Add butter. Once melted, add chicken as a single layer. Cook for 3 minutes, then flip and cook for 4–6 minutes or until chicken is cooked through (165°F). Set aside to cool.

**Cauliflower Mix** — Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine cauliflower, olive oil, and garlic. Bake in oven for about 10 minutes.

Once the cauliflower is tender and no liquid remains, stir in 3 tablespoons (1 large lime) lime juice and cilantro. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

**Create meals** — Chop chicken and divide into five containers. Add rows of corn, black beans, and cauliflower mix (about ½-cup cauliflower mix per container).

In five new containers, divide lettuce evenly. Top with 1-2 lime wedges. Next, divide in pico de gallo and Greek yogurt.

Cover and place in fridge until ready to enjoy!

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Jennifer Cavanagh
BSN, RN, MSW, CHPN

director of case management and palliative care

Makes: 5 meals
Mercy Gift Shop

Mark your calendars for the next big gift shop events!

June 17–28: Inventory Reduction Sale
November 3–4: Walk into Christmas Gift Show and Bake Sale

All proceeds support programs and services for children in MercyOne’s care.

Monday, Thursday and Friday: 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Tuesday and Wednesday: 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Better Burrito Bowl

“Better burrito bowl is a wonderful recipe that is easy to prepare and has great flavor. Cauliflower crumbles are a lower carbohydrate option and an excellent substitute for rice. Get creative with toppings if those listed are not to your liking. This recipe is great for busy weeks as summer activities increase and it becomes more challenging to prepare regular meals.”

— Stacy Huss, RD, LD

Nutrition information (per serving):
398 calories, 41g carbohydrates,
33g protein, 3.4g saturated fat,
11g fiber, 551mg sodium, 4.4g sugar