

HealthViews

PEDIATRIC PROVIDERS JOIN URGENT CARE IN WACONIA

Ridgeview opened its newest urgent care site on the Waconia Campus in December 2024. Although all providers on staff provide standardized care for children (and patients of all ages), three new pediatric providers joined the team in January with a part-time presence.

These providers are specially trained in pediatrics and are further equipped to address the special medical needs of younger patients. “We are pleased to bring pediatric care to an urgent care setting,” Kelly Lemieux, MD, Pediatrics, said. “Children have unique needs at all stages of growth and development. We can meet those needs with the tools and resources right-sized to help kids and families have a great experience.”

According to Dr. Lemieux, the most common non-life-threatening pediatric illness and injury symptoms appropriate for urgent care include:

- + Asthma symptoms
- + Bug bites and skin infections
- + Cold and flu symptoms
- + Ear pain
- + Minor injuries
- + Pink eye (conjunctivitis)
- + Rashes
- + Sore throat
- + Urinary tract infections

Pediatric providers seeing patients at the urgent care site in Waconia are Dr. Lemieux and pediatric nurse practitioners Teresa Bekkala and Kiersten Nolan.

Urgent care on the Waconia Campus is located in the Ridgeview Professional Building, 560 S. Maple Street, Ste. 30.

Hours: Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. *Closed holidays.*



TOOLS TO FIT YOUR LIFE

How technology enhances your health care

From ordering groceries online to streaming your favorite shows, technology has transformed how we navigate daily life, and health care is no different. At Ridgeview, tools like MyChart and virtual care services make it easier to access the care you need, when you need it, where you need it. These technology advancements are designed to fit into your busy life, giving you more time to focus on what matters most — your health and well-being.

CARE AND ACCESS TO MEET YOU WHERE YOU ARE

As technology evolves, so does the way we deliver care. In 2024, Ridgeview expanded its virtual care services to include greater access to face-to-face video visits for many primary and specialty care providers, as well as on-demand virtual urgent care.

“At Ridgeview, our goal is to bring forward the best online tools available to make engaging with your health care easy and convenient,” Andrew Kester, Chief Information Officer, Ridgeview, said.

With care options available in a virtual setting, you can meet your provider from home, at work or on the go via your personal device. Whether you’re managing a minor illness or checking in after a procedure, virtual visits ease the burden of having to travel or take time off of work to receive care.

MANAGE YOUR CARE WITH MYCHART

MyChart gives you 24/7 access to your medical records, making it easier to manage your health at your convenience. From checking test results and viewing after-visit summaries to scheduling appointments or requesting prescription refills, managing your care has never been easier.

“We strive to prioritize and offer features that are the highest value to our patients, and MyChart is a fantastic tool to help patients be directly involved with their care,” Kester said. “From an accessibility standpoint, the platform is very intuitive and user friendly.”



Matthew Kalina, DO
Ridgeview Clinics

MyChart offers many useful features to help streamline your care and connection to Ridgeview, including:

Managing appointments: Established patients (meaning those who have received care at Ridgeview in the past three years) with a MyChart account can conveniently schedule, request or cancel appointments with most primary and specialty care providers.

Connecting with your care team: Using your MyChart account, you can send a secure message directly to your care team and get the answers you need quickly.

Self-triaging using the symptom checker: It can be difficult to determine the best plan of care when you aren’t feeling well. By answering a series of questions regarding your symptoms, the self-triage feature will help guide you to the appropriate care option — including whether a virtual or in-person urgent care visit or scheduled appointment with your provider is best.

Caring for the whole family: For families, MyChart gives you the ability to stay on top of everyone’s appointments, immunizations, medications and more — all from your account.

YOUR CARE, YOUR WAY

Technology isn’t just changing health care — it’s changing how we care for ourselves. Tools like virtual care and MyChart bring convenience, connection and comfort into the health care experience, allowing you to take a more active role in your well-being. For more information about Ridgeview’s virtual care services, visit ridgeviewmedical.org/virtual-care.

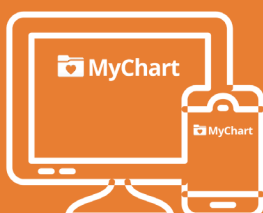
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Manage your care using MyChart with 24/7 access



DOWNLOAD THE MYCHART APP

- + Schedule and manage appointments
- + See your test results
- + Request prescription refills
- + View your after-visit notes
- + Message your care team
- + Symptom checker (self-triage)
- + Educational resources
- + And more

Learn more about MyChart and its features by visiting ridgeviewmedical.org/mychart.

NEW PROVIDERS

Oct. 2024 - Feb. 2025



ALEX BLOOMQUIST, PA-C
Urgent Care
Waconia



ROBERT BRENNER, MD
Spine & Pain



ALYSSA HARL, PA-C
Urgent Care
Waconia



THAER HASAN, MSN, CNP, FNP-BC
Urgent Care
Waconia



SHEILA HENNEN, DNP, CNP, FNP-C
Urgent Care
Waconia



LAUREN INGLES, PA-C
Cosmetic Dermatology
Ridgeview Clinics in Chaska



SHELLI MCCABE, DPM
Podiatry
Ridgeview Clinics in Le Sueur



CORY MUONIO, MSN, CNP, FNP-BC
Urgent Care
Ridgeview Clinics in Chanhassen



TRISTAN PENNELLA, DO
Family Medicine
Ridgeview Clinics in Excelsior



ANDREA SCHUTH, PA-C
Urgent Care
Waconia



CHAD STENCEL, MSN, CNP, FNP-C
Spine & Pain

EXPANDED COSMETIC DERMATOLOGY SERVICES NOW AVAILABLE

Meet Lauren Ingles, PA-C, Cosmetic Dermatology

Ridgeview Clinics in Chaska recently welcomed Lauren Ingles, PA-C, to the Cosmetic Dermatology team. Ingles is a board-certified physician assistant who has a passion for preventive health, skin health and enhancing patients' natural beauty and features.

Ingles' medical expertise goes beyond cosmetic dermatology. With a background in emergency medicine and orthopedics, she takes a skilled, medically informed approach to cosmetic dermatology — focusing on both aesthetics and skin health. This ensures patients receive safe, evidence-based treatment from a medical expert.

"I always knew I wanted to make an impact on people's lives," Ingles said. "That began with caring for patients during their most vulnerable moments and has now evolved into helping them feel like their best self."

Ridgeview's Cosmetic Dermatology practice offers more than just aesthetic improvements.

Cosmetic dermatology helps enhance skin health, restore confidence and address common concerns, such as fine lines and wrinkles, acne, sun damage, scarring and uneven skin tone. From advanced laser treatments and injectables to medical-grade skin care, Ingles offers a range of treatment options to suit individual needs.

Whether you're exploring cosmetic dermatology for the first time or looking for a refresh, schedule a free consultation by calling 952.442.3188.



Scan the QR code to learn more about cosmetic dermatology services at Ridgeview.

'THE NURSES TREATED US LIKE FAMILY'

Family of pediatric patient experiences family-centered care at Ridgeview



“Our 5-month-old daughter, Isla, developed a cough on a Friday afternoon in January. She did well throughout the weekend, until Sunday evening when we noticed she had difficulty breathing and her heart was racing. On Monday morning, we took her to urgent care in Arlington, where we learned her oxygen level was concerning low. We were referred to Ridgeview's Emergency Department in Waconia for further evaluation and were later admitted to the Pediatric Limited-Stay Unit for supportive care, including oxygen therapy.

Isla tested positive for COVID-19 and RSV. As an infant, this put her at increased risk for a severe RSV infection.

We would like to acknowledge the wonderful staff who cared for our daughter. From the start, our admitting nurse reviewed what to expect and made sure my husband and I were comfortable. Throughout our stay she would occasionally stop by to see how we were doing.

Isla's primary nurse also provided extraordinary care and was a huge advocate for our daughter. At home, we use formula and donor milk — it was unexpected and absolutely amazing that Ridgeview was able to provide Isla with donor milk during her stay.

Our Ridgeview experience came full circle when two of the night-shift nurses remembered our family from when Isla was born — one of them was even Isla's nurse while she received care in the NICU.

Seeing consistent and familiar faces made our time at Ridgeview so much easier. When I tell you that all the nurses treated us like family, I really mean it. They were absolutely fantastic.

Thank you to everyone involved in Isla's care — she truly was in the best place possible and received the best care.”

Kelly & Greg Drewiske
ARLINGTON

FROM SYMPTOMS TO SOLUTIONS

Understanding ear infections in children

Ear infections are a frequent part of growing up, but for some, they're more than just an occasional annoyance — they can lead to sleepless nights, endless doctor visits and ongoing discomfort. While many ear infections will clear up on their own, recurring or severe cases may require the expertise of an otolaryngologist, commonly referred to as an ear, nose and throat (ENT) specialist.

TWO KINDS OF EAR INFECTIONS

A middle ear infection, also known as otitis media, occurs when fluid builds up behind the eardrum and becomes infected by bacteria or viruses. John Meccia, MD, otolaryngologist, Ridgeview, explains there are two kinds of otitis media — acute and chronic.

Acute otitis media: Comes on quickly, often following a cold or respiratory infection and is caused by trapped fluid that becomes infected by bacteria and viruses. This infection can cause symptoms such as pain, irritability and fever.

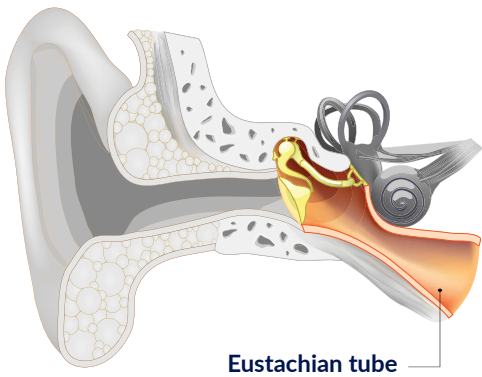
Chronic otitis media: Occurs when there is fluid in one or both ears, either often or persistently. Fluid may be present without an infection, which is called chronic otitis media with effusion. Because there is no infection present, your child may not feel pain, discomfort or have a fever.

THE SECOND MOST COMMON ILLNESS IN CHILDREN

If your child experiences frequent ear infections, you aren't alone. In fact, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, ear infections are among the most common childhood illnesses, right after the common cold.

Dr. Meccia explains that there are a few factors that contribute to children experiencing ear infections more frequently than older kids and adults. "One reason is that the eustachian tube takes years to mature in its anatomy and function, and that makes children more inclined to ear infections."

MIDDLE EAR



Eustachian tubes are the small passageways that help drain fluid from the ear. In children, these passageways are much shorter and horizontal compared to adults, making drainage more difficult.

Dr. Meccia explains two other common reasons: lack of immune competency and exposure. Young children's immune systems aren't fully developed, so in settings where they are exposed to many germs, such as daycare, their bodies have a much harder time fighting off infections.

DETERMINING THE BEST TREATMENT

Not all ear infections require antibiotics or tubes, as many will resolve on their own within a few days. For older children with a mild and uncomplicated acute infection, Dr. Meccia says you can treat the infection symptomatically with the use of ibuprofen or acetaminophen (Tylenol), rather than using antibiotics. If the infection persists for more than two or three days, your child's health care provider may prescribe an antibiotic to help fight the infection. If your child experiences frequent infections, ones that don't respond to antibiotics or if there is concern of hearing loss, your child's provider might refer you to an ENT for specialized care.

An ENT may suggest treatments like ear tubes, which help prevent fluid buildup, reduce to the risk of future infections and can make a significant difference in your child's quality of life. "It's a great procedure in terms of fixing the problem. It's very brief, low-risk and is done in the operating room under anesthesia. Working through an operating microscope, I make a small incision in the eardrum, suction out the fluid and place the tube — the whole procedure is done in a matter of minutes."

TRUST THE EXPERTS

If ear infections are becoming a recurring issue for your child, causing significant discomfort or impacting their quality of life, it might be time to get help from the experts. Dr. Meccia emphasizes that pediatricians and primary care providers do a good job of determining the best course of treatment or next steps. From managing acute infections to identifying when specialized care is needed, they will ensure your child receives the appropriate treatment. Don't hesitate to talk to your child's pediatrician or primary care provider to determine if it might be time for a referral to an ENT.

When a referral is necessary, Ridgeview's team of ENT specialists are here to provide prompt, high-quality care to help your child feel their best. To learn more about ENT services at Ridgeview, scan the QR code or visit ridgeviewmedical.org/ent.



John Meccia, MD
Otolaryngologist, Ridgeview

TIPS FOR PREVENTING EAR INFECTIONS

While it can be very difficult to prevent ear infections, there are steps parents can take to help reduce the risk in children:

Breastfeeding: If possible, breastfeed exclusively until your baby is 6 months old and continue for at least 12 months.

Avoid bottles while lying flat: Dr. Meccia explains drinking out of a bottle while lying flat works against the anatomy and function of the eustachian tube, increasing the likelihood of milk entering the eustachian tube and causing inflammation.

Avoid secondhand smoke: Smoke irritates the lining of the eustachian tube, which can cause fluid buildup and infection in the middle ear.

Vaccines: Make sure your child is current with their recommended vaccines to help reduce the risk of illness.

Handwashing: Handwashing is one of the best ways to stay healthy and prevent the spread of germs — instill healthy habits in your child and lead by example.

SAVE *the* DATE

UPCOMING RIDGEVIEW FOUNDATION EVENTS

APR 25

PINS FOR A PURPOSE
Bowlero

JUN 22

GROOVIN' ON THE GREEN
TWO-DAY EVENT

COMMUNITY CONCERT
Sovereign Estate

JUN 23

GOLF TOURNAMENT
Island View Golf Club

Join us!

Scan the QR code to learn more.



HealthViews



2024
in review

2,600+
Total Employees

Hospital Campuses **4**

27,418
Inpatient hospital stays

1,457
BIRTHS



12

Clinic locations

720,968
lab tests

176,584
Clinic visits



1,000+
PHYSICIANS &
ADVANCED PRACTITIONERS

17,097
ambulance calls

16,067
SURGERIES (CASES)

54,291
HOME CARE/HOSPICE VISITS



46,168
Urgent care visits

48,025
ED visits

3

million dollars raised annually



RIDGEVIEW FOUNDATION

27 INITIATIVES FUNDED BY NEARLY 3K DONORS

RIDGEVIEW EXPANDS SPINE & PAIN SERVICES TO OFFER SURGICAL OPTIONS

Treatment for acute back pain often begins with simple at-home remedies to relieve pain and discomfort – such as taking over-the-counter pain relievers, resting, applying hot or cold packs, exercise, massage and more. If relief isn't achieved within a few days or weeks, it's time to seek care and treatment from a health care provider. Left untreated, persistent back pain can cause significant disability, missed work and unplanned visits for emergency care.

MANAGING BACK PAIN BEGINS WITH AN ACCURATE DIAGNOSIS

The first step – prior to treatment – is to accurately diagnose the underlying condition causing pain. It can be a structural problem such as a herniated disc or vertebral fracture, or a condition such as arthritis, infection, nerve pain or kidney stones. Lifestyle factors and age-related changes can also have a significant impact on the health of the spine. Conversation about treatment options generally begin with conservative approaches to care, such as physical therapy and medication. If pain persists, especially with nerve compression symptoms that indicate structural concerns, your provider may recommend surgery.

In February, Ridgeview expanded its Spine & Pain services to offer surgical options for care with the addition of Robert Brenner, MD. Dr. Brenner specializes in operative and nonoperative care for spinal problems with subspecialty training in spinal robotics and minimally invasive surgery. "Every patient is unique in their condition and treatment plan. Although we initially seek nonoperative modalities for care, after exhausting other alternatives, surgery may ultimately be the best approach for a successful outcome," Dr. Brenner said.

Dr. Brenner joins Nima Adimi, MD, who is board certified in anesthesiology and pain medicine. Dr. Adimi treats patients using cutting-edge interventions, including complementary and alternative therapies to promote safer pain management and reduce reliance on opioids. Also new to the Spine & Pain team is Chad Stencel, NP. Stencel is accustomed to treating diverse patient needs while managing dynamic conditions.

Ridgeview's Spine & Pain providers see patients for consults at the Chaska Campus (Two Twelve Medical Center) and the Ridgeview Professional Building on the Waconia Campus, while most surgeries will be performed in Waconia.

To learn more about Ridgeview's comprehensive Spine & Pain services, scan the QR code or visit ridgeviewmedical.org/spineandpain. Schedule an appointment through MyChart or by calling 952.856.4033.

In addition to Stencel and Drs. Brenner and Adimi, Ridgeview's Spine & Pain team includes Angela Larson, MSN, CNP, FNP-BC; and Mevhibe Meral Atay, PhD, CNP, AGNP-C.

WHEN TO SEEK CARE

Seek care if your back pain:

- + Doesn't improve within a few weeks
- + Is severe or constant
- + Radiates down one or both legs
- + Causes numbness or weakness in your legs
- + Occurs after a significant injury
- + Worsens over time
- + Is accompanied by bladder or bowel control issues

