Boston Hospitals with Niche Specialties

Specific ailments call for specific specialties. Here’s where to go, and when.

By Jamie Ducharme

For some injuries—bagel-slicing gone awry or a sprained ankle, say—any emergency room will do. But for the serious, scary, or downright unusual, these Boston-area hospitals have niche specialties that cater to very targeted ailments.

You want a doctor who can (literally) feel your pain.

Joel Salinas, a clinical fellow in neurology and neuropsychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital, has a condition called mirror touch synesthesia, which allows him to feel things he observes, such as a hug or a stubbed toe, in his own body.

You want a little extra hand-holding while giving birth.

At Mount Auburn Hospital, about 40 percent of births are midwife-assisted—as much as five times the rate of many institutions—and midwifery is available as primary pregnancy care to any patient in good health.
You have something in your eye, and it’s 2 a.m.

Massachusetts Eye & Ear Infirmary houses the only 24/7 eye emergency room in New England, treating everything from conjunctivitis to serious trauma and cuts. The ER sees about 20,000 urgent cases each year.

You think you have a concussion.

Emerson Hospital’s new Robert C. Cantu Concussion Center is the only Boston spot with a Dynavision system (a board that helps train neurocognitive and motor skills) and a Vasper—an exercise machine that uses body cooling and compression.

College is taking its toll.

McLean Hospital’s College Mental Health Program treats more than 600 college students from 200 universities each year, making it one of the biggest higher-education-specific mental health centers in the U.S.