

FOCUSED ON YOU



MedStar Montgomery
Medical Center

MedStarMontgomery.org

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Letter

From the President



DEAR FRIENDS,

The signs of fall are all around us. Leaves are turning colors, the final harvest has begun, and with this changing of the season is a feeling of thankfulness for what we have. And at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center we are thankful for many things.

In July, we received the 2013 Delmarva Foundation Excellence Award for Quality Improvement. Besides the accolades of such a prestigious award, it is solid proof of the hard work and professionalism our physicians and staff show day in and day out for the well-being of patients in our care.

We always strive for better outcomes for our patients, and our surgical team supports these continued efforts by offering patients continued improvements in how we perform surgeries. Newlywed Caitlin Snider knows firsthand the benefit of MedStar Montgomery's top-notch surgical team. Turn to **page 3** to learn how she was able to take advantage of our single-site technique during gallbladder surgery.

Just as our surgical team is making strides in enhanced techniques, MedStar Montgomery is always ensuring you have the information you need throughout the year to stay healthy. Discover how to avoid this year's flu altogether with Dr. Kerr's sage advice on **page 4**.

Another instance of both high-quality care and health information is right around the corner at our Huntington's disease clinic. While rare, this disease requires specialized care for patients seeking relief and management. For the first time, Montgomery County residents can receive expert Huntington's disease care at MedStar Montgomery without having to travel hours. Turn to **page 5** to read about this fantastic resource within our community.

Yours in good health,

PETER MONGE, FACHE

President, MedStar Montgomery Medical Center
Senior Vice President, MedStar Health

MedStar Montgomery
Medical Center

Knowledge and Compassion **Focused on You**

EXCELLENCE IN QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

MedStar Montgomery Medical Center is proud to receive the 2013 Delmarva Foundation Excellence Award for Quality Improvement, having excelled in four national inpatient clinical areas.

Delmarva Foundation for Medical Care, Inc is the Medicare Quality Improvement Organization for Maryland. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services contracts with Delmarva Foundation for Medical Care to improve the quality of health care for Maryland's more than 730,000 Medicare beneficiaries.



The award honors MedStar Montgomery for excelling in patient safety and quality improvement. To receive the Delmarva Foundation Excellence Award, MedStar Montgomery had to meet specific performance improvement criteria on 14 measures in four national inpatient clinical areas that include heart attack, heart failure, surgical care improvement and pneumonia.

"The recognition of this extraordinary award validates our strong commitment to the community we serve," says Peter Monge, president of MedStar Montgomery. "This accomplishment is not possible without the loyalty and hard work of the physicians, nurses and associates who work here."

FOCUSED ON YOU

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Surgery Without Scars

As a 29-year-old newlywed planning her honeymoon, **Caitlin Snider** had a lot to be excited about. But she got a little more excitement than she bargained for when she found out she needed unexpected surgery.

Caitlin had been having stomach pain and nausea for several months. A few weeks before her honeymoon, she got a diagnosis: gallstones. Her gallbladder would need to be removed, and soon.

Fortunately, Caitlin had a great option available to her. Robotic-assisted single-site surgery using the da Vinci Surgical System at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center could be performed with less pain, a faster recovery and no visible scar to take on her honeymoon.

SINGLE-SITE TECHNIQUE

In the past, removing the gallbladder meant a full open surgery with a large incision and a long recovery. Today, many patients have “laparoscopic” surgery, during which surgeons can remove the gallbladder by inserting surgical instruments through several smaller incisions. This technique is less invasive, but it still leaves scars. With robotic single-site surgery, the surgeon does the entire procedure through one tiny incision.

“I met with Dr. Tweedt as well as a surgeon at another hospital, but only MedStar Montgomery offered the single-site option,” Caitlin says. In fact, Shawn Tweedt, DO, general surgeon with MedStar Montgomery Medical Center is one of only 10 surgeons in the area who can perform this procedure. “It was an easy decision for me.”

“We perform the surgery through a 1-inch incision hidden at the belly button, so there is virtually no scar afterwards,” says Dr. Tweedt. “It is a tightly-controlled, meticulous and very safe way to perform gallbladder surgery. And because you don’t have additional incisions, there is also less pain and a quicker recovery.”

ROBOTIC-ASSISTED SURGERY

“I used to do medical device training, so I was familiar with the da Vinci system, and I know it takes a lot of practice to use those machines,” Caitlin recalls. “Dr. Tweedt has been using it since 2008 and has done hundreds of surgeries with it. That was very reassuring to me.”

Caitlin’s surgery went smoothly. She arrived at 10 a.m., was back home that afternoon, and was feeling better the next day. A week later, she was able to return to work. That spring, she enjoyed her honeymoon without issues—or unsightly scars.

LOOKING AHEAD

Robotic single-site surgery is an excellent option for people who need gallbladder surgery. In the future, Dr. Tweedt believes it will be applied to many more surgical techniques. And he is confident that, with the support of MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, he will be able to continue bringing new surgical options to patients.



Caitlin Snider enjoys spending time in her garden.

“Surgery by its nature is very invasive,” says Dr. Tweedt. “If someone has to have a procedure, why not leave as minimal a sign you were there as possible?” <<

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE SINGLE-SITE SURGERY TECHNIQUE, VISIT [MedStarMontgomery.com/singlesite](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.com/singlesite) OR TO SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT WITH DR. TWEEDT, CALL 301-774-8881.



Are You Ready for *Flu Season*?

As the leaves start to change each fall, so too come the first fevers, body aches and fatigue of flu season.

"We see our first cases of flu around September or October, and the season usually peaks around December or January," says Michael Kerr, MD, Emergency Department medical director at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center.



Michael Kerr, MD

But in many cases, the flu can be avoided altogether by taking a few simple steps. Here are Dr. Kerr's top four tips to stay healthy.

1 GET VACCINATED: The flu vaccine is, by far, your best defense against getting sick.

"Remember that it takes one to three weeks to build up full immunity, so get vaccinated early," Dr. Kerr advises.

There's one myth he'd like to dispel once and for all: "You can't get the flu from the flu vaccine," he says. "If you do happen to show symptoms around the time you get vaccinated, that means the virus was already in your system, or you picked it up before you had full immunity."

2 WASH YOUR HANDS: Flu virus spreads through coughs and sneezes, and the virus can live on surfaces like doorknobs. Even if you are vaccinated,

there's a chance you might catch a strain of flu virus not included in the vaccine (although it should still give you some protection). That's why it's important to wash your hands frequently with soap and water. You can also use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if a sink isn't available.

3 IF YOU GET SICK, STAY HOME: "Some people think they're doing their boss a favor if they go into work when they're sick," Dr. Kerr says. "But meanwhile, they're infecting the entire office."

If you do get sick, he strongly recommends staying at home until your fever is gone for 24 hours without the use of fever medication such as Tylenol or Motrin.

4 MAKE A PLAN WITH YOUR DOCTOR: For older adults, children and people with fragile immune systems or respiratory conditions, the flu can be particularly dangerous. Dr. Kerr advises these individuals or their caregivers to plan ahead with their doctors before flu season starts.

"In addition to getting vaccinated, ask your doctor which symptoms would warrant an office visit," he says. "If you catch the illness in its very early stages, there are antiviral medications that can lessen the severity and length of the flu."

In healthy people, the flu usually goes away in a few days. But if your symptoms persist, or if you start experiencing breathing problems, high fever or other severe issues, call your doctor immediately. <<

New Huntington's Disease Clinic Provides Specialized Care

Huntington's disease (HD) is a rare genetic disorder that causes nerve cells in the brain to break down. The disease is so rare—an estimated 30,000 Americans are known to have HD, including 1,400 people in the Washington, D.C., Virginia and Maryland area. Many HD patients often end up traveling long distances to receive specialized care.

Now, for the first time, Montgomery County residents can receive expert HD care close to home thanks to the new HD clinic at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center. The community-based clinic is part of the Huntington Disease Care, Education and Research Center at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital.

Launched in collaboration with MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, the clinic offers expert care and support to HD patients and their families from pre-diagnosis through late stages of the disease. Patients are also offered the opportunity to participate in research if they are interested in doing so.

"A lot of medical professionals learn about HD in training, but they may only see one or two cases in their entire career," explains Fahd Amjad, MD, a neurologist and clinical co-director of the Center. "We see several patients each month."

EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE FOR BETTER DISEASE MANAGEMENT

HD is a progressive neurological disorder that causes a range of physical and behavioral symptoms, according to Karen Anderson, MD, a neuropsychiatrist and director of the Huntington Disease Center. Although there is no cure for HD, treatment can help manage symptoms—a message Dr. Anderson wants patients, families and even referring physicians to understand.

"Unfortunately, some physicians have the belief that there is nothing to do for Huntington's, so they don't refer people for specialized care," she says. "We want people to know that there is always something you can do for someone with Huntington's disease, no matter what their stage of disease."

A COMMUNITY OF CARE UNDER ONE ROOF

At the new MedStar Montgomery clinic, Dr. Anderson leads a team that includes psychiatrists, neurologists, genetic counselors, a social worker, a neuropsychologist and speech and physical therapists who see patients once a month. Bringing so many HD specialists together under one roof is more convenient for patients and leads to more coordinated care, says Dr. Amjad. "A lot of people with HD end up with very fragmented care," he explains.

"We're providing care as a team," agrees Hope Heller, the Center's full-time social worker. "Before a patient leaves for the day, everyone has talked and we all know what the plan is."

"We treat the whole person, and the family is really an extension of our patient. We're here for everyone." <<



Drs. Fahd Amjad and Karen Anderson working together at the Huntington Disease Care, Education and Research Center.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE HUNTINGTON DISEASE CARE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH CENTER, VISIT MedStarGeorgetown.org/Huntington OR CALL 202-444-0816.

Unusual Treatment Offers Pancreatic Cancer Patient Normal Life



Robert enjoys some time on the green for a few rounds of golf.

In December 2012, 70-year-old Robert of Maryland began experiencing painful indigestion and stomach cramping. Imaging tests revealed the devastating reason for his symptoms—pancreatic cancer.

Pancreatic cancer grows rapidly and outcomes are usually poor. Already, Robert's cancer had spread to his liver.

CLINICAL TRIAL OFFERS NEW THERAPY

Robert made an appointment with Michael Pishvaian, MD, PhD, an oncologist at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital who specializes in gastrointestinal cancers. Dr. Pishvaian was conducting a clinical trial involving a new approach to pancreatic cancer treatment. Robert jumped at the opportunity to participate.

"Typically, patients with pancreatic cancer are given a standard chemotherapy regimen, and there have been improvements in chemotherapy in the recent years. But despite these improvements, most patients actually do not benefit from these 'standard' treatments," explains

Dr. Pishvaian. "Instead of giving patients one-size-fits-all chemotherapy, our clinical trial tailors treatment to the patient's individual tumor makeup."

Dr. Pishvaian took a small sample of Robert's tumor and sent it for specialized testing to analyze its molecular makeup. Dr. Pishvaian then matched a combination of chemotherapy drugs to target Robert's specific cancer. The type of chemotherapy chosen was very unusual for pancreatic cancer. No one knew how the cancer would react.

SMOOTH SAILING

Robert began once-a-week chemotherapy at Medstar Montgomery Medical Center, where Dr. Pishvaian holds regular practice hours.

"The ability to go to MedStar Montgomery for this advanced

treatment made the process so much easier," Robert says. "I never had to worry about parking or traffic. The drive was shorter and much less stressful."

Over the next four months, Robert braced himself for the side effects of treatment—but none came.

"I thought maybe the chemo wasn't working because I felt great, but Dr. Pishvaian assured me the tumor was shrinking," recalls Robert. "I worked 40 hours a week as a licensed optician throughout treatment. I've also been able to keep swimming and playing the guitar, and have even picked up golf."

HOPE THROUGH ADVANCED TREATMENT

Robert's exceptional outcomes allowed Dr. Pishvaian to try other therapies, including a cutting-edge procedure called transarterial chemoembolization, performed by interventional radiologist Alexander Kim, MD. The therapy involves injecting tiny beads infused with chemotherapy drugs into the artery that feeds the liver, targeting Robert's difficult-to-treat metastasized cancer.

"Robert is able to benefit from other cancer treatments because he is tolerating chemotherapy so well," explains Dr. Pishvaian. "His outcomes are making me rethink how we treat pancreatic cancer."

"I lead a completely normal life," says Robert. "My tumor is now half its former size and the lesions on my liver are disappearing. I'm fortunate to have such skilled doctors and access to the most state-of-the-art cancer care." <<

For more information about our clinical trials or to make an appointment with Dr. Pishvaian, call **301-774-8881**.



If it wasn't for Dr. Kevin McMahon, Jim Ehrenfried and Sam Milwit may have stayed on the sidelines.

Older Athletes Retake the Field Following Joint Replacements

The sidelines are no place for **Jim Ehrenfried, 79**, and **Sam Milwit, 73**. Both have played baseball and softball since they were kids and neither had plans to stop anytime soon. That is, until joint problems threatened to bench them for good.

For Sam, a bad slide into third base left him unable to round the bases. Jim had hip pain that was getting progressively worse. But he wasn't ready to call it quits, either.

"I'm not giving up playing," says Jim. "I don't want to live a sedentary life, sitting on the couch watching TV all day. That's not me."

Looking for help to get back in the game, the men turned to their teammates for advice. One name kept coming up: Kevin McMahon, MD, MedStar Montgomery Medical Center

division chief, MedStar Georgetown Orthopaedic Institute.

"Dr. McMahon has treated at least eight other guys in my leagues," says Jim. "The word gets around quickly when you're playing ball with people and you have a doctor who does such a good job."

THE PLACE TO GO FOR JOINT REPLACEMENT

Joint replacement is the most common treatment today for serious joint problems, and it is increasingly common among older adults.

"Joint replacement surgery is so important for softball players in their 60s, 70s and even their 80s, because they have a passion for playing and can continue to play," says Dr. McMahon. "Playing sports promotes mental and physical well-being for older athletes, so it's very important that they can continue."

MedStar Montgomery had the first dedicated joint unit in Montgomery County, and has provided joint replacement surgery for more than 20 years. Today, the hospital offers total joint replacement for hips, knees and shoulders, and a variety of other orthopaedic services. All surgeons are fellowship-trained and use best practices developed at the MedStar Georgetown Orthopaedic Institute.

"Total joint replacement is not for everyone and is not perfect," says Dr. McMahon. "But it improves function and decreases pain in more than 90 percent of patients."

RETURNING TO THE FIELD

Sam had a knee replacement with Dr. McMahon. Jim had a hip and knee replacement. Today, both are making the most of their rebuilt joints. Jim plays in three different softball leagues, and Sam plays twice a week.

"My leg is as good as it ever has been," says Sam. "I have absolutely no pain."

Jim, meanwhile, has some advice for anyone with joint pain: Take action.

"People may think, 'Oh, I have a bad hip or knee; I can't do anything anymore,' but it's not true," he says. "Go get it fixed and get back out there." <<

IF JOINT PAIN IS KEEPING YOU ON THE SIDELINES, FIND OUT IF JOINT REPLACEMENT CAN HELP YOU. VISIT MedStarGeorgetownOrtho.org OR CALL 855-788-MGOI (855-788-6464).

UPCOMING EVENTS

At MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, the health and wellness of our community is very important. One of the ways we try to keep our community healthy and well is by offering classes, lectures and screenings. We invite you to join us for any of our free informational lectures this year.

To register or to see a complete list of all of our classes and events, visit MedStarMontgomery.org/Classes or call **301-774-8881**.

BABYSITTING PLUS CPR

Prepares 12- to 15-year-olds with the essentials needed to be a competent baby sitter, including safety, childcare development, safe play, first aid and CPR certification (two-year certificate). This is a two-day class. Please bring a snack. Saturdays, Nov. 2 and 9, Dec. 7 and 14, or Jan. 11 and 18, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

\$65

YOGA

This ancient and systematic approach to good health and well-being helps reduce stress, improve concentration and develop strength, flexibility and balance.

Beginner class: Sundays, Nov. 3 to Dec. 29, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

\$80; eight-week series classes

WEIGHT LOSS SURGERY PHYSICIAN SEMINAR

Learn how Weight Loss Surgery can help you lose weight and be the person you want to be.

Thursdays, 6 to 7 p.m.

FREE

CPR & AED

Basic CPR; rescue breathing, choking relief for infants, children and adults, and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) use.

- Wednesday, Nov. 6, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.
- Thursdays, Dec. 5, Jan. 2, 9, Jan. 30, 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
- Saturdays, Nov. 16, Dec. 14, Jan. 25, 9 a.m. to noon

\$80

HOME ALONE

Prepares 8- to 11-year-olds to spend brief periods of time alone. Class provides skills to help kids be safe when there is no adult supervision, including answering the door and telephone and calling 911.

Saturdays, Nov. 9, Dec. 14, Jan. 18, 9 a.m. to noon.

\$35

BARIATRIC SUPPORT GROUP

Open discussions about weight and surgery related issues.

Wednesdays, Nov. 27, Dec. 18, Jan. 29,

6 to 7 p.m.

FREE

HEARTSAVER FIRST AID

Teaches how to manage illness and until professional help arrives. Meets the requirements for Childcare Providers certification.

- Thursdays, Nov. 14, Dec. 12, Jan. 16, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.
- Saturdays, Nov. 16, Dec. 14, Jan. 25, 12:45 to 5 p.m.

\$55

NEW MOTHER'S POSTPARTUM SUPPORT GROUP

Ever wonder if you're the only one feeling stressed and alone now that a baby has joined your family? If you are finding yourself feeling sad, anxious, angry or irritable, group support can help. Our group will be led by two therapists who specialize in the postpartum period. Babies are welcome.

Mondays, 10 to 11:30 a.m.

FREE

SENIOR FIT

A free 45-minute exercise program designed for seniors age 55 and older. Senior Fit focuses on increasing strength, flexibility, balance, coordination and cardiovascular endurance. Exercise is an important factor in preventing falls, managing chronic illnesses and improving quality of life. Classes are ongoing and a physician's consent form is required to participate.

Tuesdays, 9 to 9:45 a.m.

FREE