



MedStar Montgomery
Medical Center

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FOCUSED ON YOU

WINTER 2018

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Helps Patients Reach
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From the President

Dear Friends,

There's nothing to get you excited about self-improvement like the start of a new year. At MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, we began 2018 with a renewed commitment to our culture of continuous improvement. Our New Year's resolution was to help you make *your* healthy resolutions successful—and we hope that you are feeling as excited about the months to come as we are. There is so much for us to accomplish together!

2017 was a great year for MedStar Montgomery. We were recognized with a Gold Plus Quality Achievement Award for Outstanding Management of Heart Failure Patients and honored by Practice Greenhealth for Environmental Excellence. We also unveiled our beautiful new Women's Board Lobby—to name just a few milestones! Throughout 2018, we plan to build on these successes.

From reaching new heights in patient care to making upgrades to our facilities, MedStar Montgomery is up to big things in 2018.

There is so much for us to accomplish together!

Our Emergency Department is newly outfitted with X-ray equipment (see page 7). Our clinicians are helping patients look and feel their best (see page 3), achieve a healthy weight (see page 4), improve their mental health (see page 6), beat lung disease (see page 8), and get heart healthy (see page 10). Our community class schedule is packed with exciting events, including support groups and exercise classes (on this page).

Let's work together to reach new health heights! We hope that our commitment to perpetual self-improvement will help you achieve your own health goals this year.

Yours in good health,

THOMAS J. SENKER, FACHE
President, MedStar Montgomery Medical Center
Senior Vice President, MedStar Health

COMMUNITY CLASS SCHEDULE

At MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, we care about the health and well-being of our community. One of the ways we help you stay healthy and active is by offering wellness classes and events.

EXERCISE CLASSES

Gentle Flow Yoga for Seniors:
\$40 for 8 weeks, dates vary

Senior Exercise:
FREE, Tuesdays and Wednesdays

Tai Chi:
FREE, Tuesdays and Wednesdays

Yoga, Beginner and Intermediate:
\$60 for 6 weeks, dates vary

DIABETES CLASSES

Diabetes Self-Management:
\$40 for 2 weeks, dates vary

Pre-Diabetes:
\$40 per 2-week session, dates vary

YOUTH PROGRAMS

Home Alone:
For ages 8 to 11, \$35, every third Saturday of the month

Babysitting + CPR:
For ages 12 to 15, \$65, dates vary

SUPPORT GROUPS

Breastfeeding Support Group:
FREE, drop-in every Thursday

Diabetes Support Group:
FREE, last Thursday of each month

Postpartum Support Group:
FREE, drop-in every Monday

Weight Management Support Group:
FREE, every first Tuesday of the month

PARENTING CLASSES (dates vary)

Complete Childbirth Preparation:
\$150 for 6 weeks

Childbirth Express: \$75

Lamaze Technique: \$60

Breastfeeding Basics: \$30

Infant Care: \$30

For full descriptions of these classes and to learn more about dates and times, visit MedStarMontgomery.org/Calendar or call **855-212-4691**.

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MedStar Montgomery
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Knowledge and Compassion
Focused on You

Protecting your skin during the winter months



Winter can be a cozy time when you're warm and toasty indoors. But cold, dry weather is also a common cause of "winter itch."

57-year-old Kelly of Silver Spring, Md., knows what painful winter skin is like.

"It is always worse in the winter," she says. "Just opening and closing my hand is uncomfortable. My skin can split. My hands have actually bled in the winter and I'm uncomfortable even shaking hands. But thanks to Dr. Best, I now have it under control."



Lacartia V. Best, MD

Lacartia V. Best, MD, a dermatologist at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, examined Kelly's condition and prescribed a topical ointment. She also recommended that Kelly keep her showers short and not too hot, since water and soap can dry skin out and wash away protective oils. Kelly says that these changes have made an enormous difference in the appearance of her skin.

"It looks like I have a different pair of hands now. I just can't believe it," she says. "I can wear nail polish again because I'm not afraid to show off my hands."

Tending to dry skin is not only a matter of your appearance—it's also about health and safety. If skin becomes severely dry, it can start to crack, which may lead to infection. Dr. Best says it is important to make sure you are doing all you can to protect your skin this time of year.

Dr. Best's most important tip? Moisturize! Apply natural oils and unscented creams to soften and moisturize your skin. Make sure the products don't contain too much alcohol, which is drying.

"Put a cream on your skin every day, especially immediately after you shower. That traps water in the skin and that hydration can reduce itching quite a bit," Dr. Best says. "I hear people say all the time that

Cold winter weather can be tough on your skin. The skin on your hands is thinner than skin on other parts of your body, making it particularly prone to dryness.

they are in too much of a rush to put on cream. But it shouldn't take a long time and it makes an enormous difference."

There are many causes of dry skin. Aging and hormonal effects of menopause can cause dry skin, but can be treated with daily cream. The skin on your hands is also thinner than on other parts of your body, making it especially difficult to keep them moisturized. Wearing gloves when you wash dishes and when you are outside in the cold can help.

Dr. Best's other tips to protect your skin include:

- Drink more water, as long as you don't have fluid restrictions for heart or liver disease or another medical condition.
- Use a humidifier to get moisture into the air of your home or office.
- Eat a healthy diet rich in omega-3 fatty acids (often found in fish) and take a daily multivitamin to moisturize your skin from the inside out.

If none of this helps, it's time to seek out a specialist like Dr. Best, who can diagnose and help manage a variety of skin conditions. She says it's important that people know that skin problems are common and are generally fixable.

"I see people every day with urgent skin concerns," Dr. Best says. "It's really rewarding to help them understand how to maintain healthy skin." ◀◀

To make an appointment or to learn more about dermatologic care at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, call **301-570-7770**.

“Weight” No More!

David Williams started 2017 like so many other Americans: with a New Year’s resolution to lose weight and keep it off, once and for all. Yet unlike so many others, he managed to drop 40 percent of his weight over the next 12 months.

How did David succeed when so many fail?

He followed in the footsteps of his wife, Keesha Matthews-Williams, and underwent weight-loss surgery with John Brebbia, MD, medical director of the highly recognized bariatric surgery program at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center.

For the truly obese—those with a body mass index of 40, or approximately 100 pounds overweight—it’s often the only way to lose the fat that threatens their health and well-being.

“I’ve always struggled with my weight, even when I was in my 20s and doing some modeling,” Keesha says. “I went through years of yo-yo dieting, where I’d drop 15 pounds only to gain back 30. Nothing worked.”

Instead, the pounds piled on her 5-foot-6-inch frame. By the time she turned 40, Keesha weighed 243 pounds. Borderline diabetic and depressed, she realized the extra weight was exacting an emotional as well as physical toll.

With nothing to lose but the weight, Keesha investigated her options. After attending a bariatric surgery seminar, she made an appointment to see Dr. Brebbia.

“He listened to me without judgment,” she says. “I could tell he was genuinely concerned about my health. I knew he was the right doctor for me.”

After going through MedStar Montgomery’s preoperative evaluation, counseling, and weight management program, Keesha had a laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy in September 2015, which reduced her stomach to about 15 percent of its original size. Over the next 12 months, she lost 100 pounds and her blood sugar levels returned to normal.



John Brebbia, MD

“The health benefits that accompany weight loss are what drives us,” Dr. Brebbia explains. “And bariatric surgery has proven to be highly effective at correcting and even eliminating diabetes, which can be very difficult to manage medically. In fact, we often see improvements within just a few weeks.”

After seeing his wife’s success, David decided to investigate the possibility of bariatric surgery for himself. Standing 6 feet 1 inch tall and weighing 320 pounds, he was burdened by his own growing list of weight-related health concerns.

“I couldn’t bend over to tie my shoes without losing my breath,” says the former military man, who had once been a toned 185 pounds. “I had high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and was pre-diabetic. On top of that, I had bad sleep apnea and would often wake up with my heart pounding, gasping for breath.”

On January 6, 2017, David had the same sleeve gastrectomy procedure that Keesha had. Since then, he’s dropped 130 pounds and counting. His health problems have disappeared.

“I’m just ecstatic,” he says. “Dr. Brebbia probably saved my life.”

Today, both David and Keesha follow a healthy diet and exercise program. David swims daily, while Keesha takes Zumba® and other fitness classes and chooses to take the stairs whenever she can. They admit it’s a change from their former lifestyle, but neither would have it any other way.

“Weight-loss surgery is definitely not ‘the easy way out,’” Keesha says. “It’s just a tool and part of the process of becoming the best version of ‘you.’ But if you put in the work, you’ll get the results.” ◀◀

For more information about bariatric surgery at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, please visit MedStarMontgomery.org/NewYou or call **855-218-4212**.

David Williams and Keesha Matthews-Williams are committed to remaining healthy after bariatric surgery.



BEFORE



BEFORE

Beating the “Winter Blues”

The winter months can be tranquil and cozy, complete with peaceful snowfall and warm sweaters.

But cold temperatures and short daylight hours can also be draining. When should you talk to your doctor about the “winter blues”?

“It’s natural to feel some fluctuation in your mood throughout the year,” says Marilou G. Tablang-Jimenez, MD, medical director of the Addiction and Mental Health Center (AMHC) at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center. “But if you are not feeling like yourself for more than two weeks, talk to your doctor. There’s so many ways that we can help!”



Marilou G. Tablang-Jimenez, MD

Sometimes, the “winter blues” are caused by a type of depression called Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD. SAD typically begins in the late fall and persists until spring. Symptoms include difficulty concentrating, tiredness or excess energy, loss of interest in people and activities you once enjoyed, and feeling hopeless, irritable or down nearly every day. People with SAD often experience increased appetite, craving for carbohydrates, and weight gain.

SAD is connected to seasonal changes in sunlight. Short winter days can disrupt your body’s internal clock (circadian rhythms), levels of mood-controlling chemicals such as serotonin in the brain, and sleep hormones such as melatonin. SAD is more common in

higher latitudes, where winter days are shortest. While SAD is most often diagnosed in women in their twenties, this disorder can affect people of all genders and ages, including children.

Patients struggling with SAD may benefit from exercise, meditative techniques like yoga, anti-depressant medication, vitamin D supplements, talk therapy, or light therapy. Light therapy involves using a special lamp that mimics sunlight. It’s an easy way to get a boost of sunshine, which can trigger changes in the brain and help you to feel happier.

While symptoms of SAD may disappear with the spring, it is still a condition that is worth treating. Depression can reduce quality of life, cause you to withdraw from social activities, impact work performance, and contribute to weight loss or gain.

“Even if you don’t meet the diagnostic criteria for SAD, you may still benefit from using a light box, getting more exercise, or talking about stress with an understanding therapist,” says Dr. Tablang-Jimenez. “Simple interventions can make a world of difference.”

Speak with your primary care physician or call the AMHC at MedStar Montgomery to make an appointment. AMHC is a world-class treatment resource for those struggling with mental health issues large and small.

There is no need to let the winter get you down! At MedStar Montgomery, our expert team can work with you to boost your mood and help you enjoy a cozy, cheerful winter. ◀◀

To learn more about mental health services at MedStar Montgomery, visit [MedStarMontgomery.org/HealthyMind](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/HealthyMind) or call **855-218-3983** to make an appointment with Dr. Tablang-Jimenez.

5 TIPS FOR WINTER WALKING

Winter walking is a great way to stay in shape and boost your mood during the cold winter months. Here are five tips for making the most of this fun, low-impact exercise:

- 1. Pick an environment that works for you.** If the cold bothers you or you are worried about a fall, move your walk indoors! Try the gym treadmill or simply walking laps around the mall.
- 2. Choose the right gear.** Make sure your gear will keep you warm and safe. Choose boots with traction and dress in layers. Moisture-wicking materials keep cold sweat off your skin. A reflective arm band or clip-on flashing light will keep you visible to motorists.
- 3. Set a goal.** Stay motivated by setting a goal you can work towards each day or week.
- 4. Bring a buddy.** Walking is a great exercise to share with friends! Find walking partners to keep you entertained (and hold you accountable to your exercise goals).
- 5. Enjoy the benefits!** Walking can help you to maintain a healthy weight, strengthen your muscles, and boost your mood.

Philanthropic Support Brings New Equipment to the Department of Emergency Medicine

"This upgrade has allowed us to bring the safety and quality of the care we provide in our ED to an even higher level. Continual improvement is at the heart of our work, and philanthropy helps make advancements possible" - Michael Kerr, MD



FOCUSED ON YOU WINTER 2018

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, the MedStar Montgomery Medical Center Emergency Department (ED) is now offering upgraded imaging capabilities.

In the past, clinicians in the ED relied upon a portable X-ray machine housed within the Imaging department, an arrangement that presented some logistical and clinical restrictions. Now, newly equipped with a designated, in-department X-ray room, the ED is working faster and better than ever.

Thanks to the support of philanthropist Shelley Gudelsky-Mulitz and other generous donors, MedStar Montgomery was able to convert a treatment room into an X-ray room equipped with a Fujifilm FDR D-EVO digital X-ray machine.

The Gudelsky-Mulitz family has long supported MedStar Montgomery. "Supporting MedStar Montgomery in making this upgrade to the ED was an easy decision," says Mrs. Gudelsky-Mulitz. "Their amazing emergency team deserves to work with the best possible equipment, and every patient experiencing a medical crisis deserves to be treated as quickly and effectively as possible. By contributing to this upgraded X-ray area, I hope to support MedStar Montgomery's efforts to keep our community healthy."

This new room and imaging technology has been positive for both patients and associates. "Our new X-ray capabilities are already making a huge impact on our patient experience," says Michael Kerr, MD, medical

director of the Emergency Department at MedStar Montgomery. "With X-ray capabilities available right in the ED, there is no longer a need for patients to move to another area of the hospital for a scan. Images can be taken and viewed more quickly, speeding along emergency care. Patients with mobility issues can also receive X-ray exams more easily and comfortably using the upgraded machine."

In addition to added convenience, the new imaging technology also offers clinical advantages. Although portable machines are safe and reliable for simple scans, they are limited in their functionality, rely upon rechargeable batteries that limit the number of exposures that can be taken, and cannot be used for longer scans without running the risk of heightened radiation exposure. The upgraded machine allows for more nuanced imaging, additional exposures, and reduces radiation exposure by 20 to 40 percent.

"At the end of the day, this upgrade has allowed us to bring the safety and quality of the care we provide in our ED to an even higher level. Continual improvement is at the heart of our work, and philanthropy helps make advancements possible," says Dr. Kerr. ◀◀

For more information about giving opportunities at the hospital, visit [MedStarMontgomery.org/Philanthropy](https://www.medstar-montgomery.org/Philanthropy) or call **855-212-4395**.

Breathing Easy



Thomasina Borkman, 81, used to suffer from shortness of breath caused by her mild chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). After successfully completing the MedStar Montgomery Medical Center's Pulmonary Outpatient Clinic's pulmonary rehabilitation program, she is back in top form. She maintains her newfound fitness by working out and attending weekly personal training sessions at her neighborhood gym. She's even signed up for dance classes.

Pulmonary Rehab Teaches Patients with Chronic Lung Diseases How to “Breathe Easy”

Thomasina Borkman, age 81, was reluctant to accept her diagnosis of mild chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), despite her physician’s referral for treatment.

The retired sociology professor from Silver Spring, Md., had grown accustomed to her shortness of breath while climbing the stairs or walking to the car. “Refusing to acknowledge my COPD allowed me to avoid treating it,” she recalls.

Thomasina had been under the care of the co-directors of the Pulmonary Outpatient Clinic at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, Manu Kaushal, MD and Vineesha Arelli, MD, since 2016. The clinicians were monitoring a dark spot on one of Thomasina’s lungs. In early 2017, the spot had grown larger and a biopsy led to an early-stage lung cancer diagnosis.

Thomasina underwent surgery to remove the lower left lobe of her lung. Today, she is cancer-free—but the experience made her take her COPD more seriously. “After my lung cancer surgery, I realized I needed to accept the COPD diagnosis and exercise,” she says.

Most patients with COPD are undiagnosed and untreated, according to Dr. Kaushal. “COPD is a progressive and chronic lung disease that worsens over the course of years. With impaired breathing and limited exercise capacity, patients modify their lifestyles, which leads to a decline in their quality of life. An early diagnosis and treatment can prevent this progressive decline and prevent hospitalizations,” he explains.



Manu Kaushal, MD

Thomasina began MedStar Montgomery Medical Center’s Pulmonary Outpatient Clinic’s pulmonary rehabilitation program. Designed to help patients regain their quality of life, the program requires a physician referral and involves 30 sessions over 10 to 12 weeks. Patients attend three sessions each week and follow individualized exercise plans.

“Pulmonary rehabilitation is the only therapy shown to improve exercise capacity and improve quality of life for people with this debilitating lung condition,” says Dr. Kaushal. “Our program helps our patients get stronger.”

Some of the program’s patients are barely able to do their daily activities when they attend orientation, explains Courtney H. Cline, M.S., M.H.A, coordinator of the Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation department. Nonetheless, most patients who attend an initial orientation complete the program successfully.

Staff teach patients pacing and breathing techniques that help combat lung-disease symptoms, such as shortness of breath. The multidisciplinary program also includes educational offerings, such as guest lectures from nutritionists, stress reduction counselors, and pharmacists. Dr. Kaushal hosts an “Ask the Pulmonologist” question and answer session.

Once they complete the program, patients are encouraged to continue exercising. They can design their own fitness plan or continue to use the department’s gym, where supervised fitness activities are available for a \$50 monthly fee.

“After participating in our program, our patients find they feel less depressed, more capable and more confident. They leave our program with a better understanding of their lung disease and how to manage their symptoms,” says Cline.

For Thomasina, the program was life-changing. She left the program with a new appreciation for the importance of exercise, new breathing techniques to combat shortness of breath, and a better understanding of her medications and nutritional needs. “I am amazed at how much I learned,” she says.

Thomasina’s ongoing maintenance program includes independent exercise at her neighborhood fitness center and working with a personal trainer once a week. Soon, she’ll be starting a dance class. ◀◀

For more information about the pulmonary rehabilitation program at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, please visit [MedStarMontgomery.org/Breathe](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/Breathe) or call **855-218-3980**.

Heart Smart: Detecting Signs of a Heart Attack

Ruth Davila is back to work after recovery from a heart attack caused by Spontaneous Coronary Artery Dissection (SCAD).

Ruth Davila never saw her heart attack coming. Ruth, now 61, has no family history of heart disease or health problems of her own. Between running her own construction company and keeping up with her three adult children, she was extremely active and also exercised regularly.

So when she felt an odd pinching sensation in her neck one afternoon in 2014, a heart attack was the furthest thing from her mind. She noticed a heavy feeling in her chest as the day went on, but chalked it up to stress. She continued on with her busy day, even attending an evening yoga class.

When she got home, she told her husband about her strange symptoms. "I didn't want to make a fuss," she says, "but he really was worried. We decided that I should go to the emergency room."

Turns out that was a great decision.

At the MedStar Montgomery Medical Center Emergency Department, cardiologist Estelle Darlyse Jean, MD, examined Ruth and told her that she had experienced a heart attack. Ruth was immediately transferred to MedStar Washington Hospital Center, where a stent was placed to restore blood flow to her heart.

Testing revealed that Ruth's heart attack had been caused by a condition called Spontaneous Coronary Artery Dissection (SCAD), which is estimated to cause about one percent of heart attacks in women. SCAD occurs when a tear forms in the wall of an artery supplying blood to the heart, trapping blood and preventing it from reaching the heart muscle. SCAD occurs most frequently in women, many of whom are young, healthy, and have none of the typical risk factors for heart disease. It is an important and often underdiagnosed cause of heart attack in women.



Estelle Darlyse Jean, MD

Awareness of cardiac conditions is particularly important for women, who tend to experience worse cardiovascular outcomes than men. Negative outcomes are due in part to an older average age when symptoms appear, as well as delays in treatment and diagnosis. Women are also more likely to experience complications after a heart attack, including heart failure, stroke, and bleeding problems.

"There is a popular misperception that heart conditions are mostly a concern for men," says Dr. Jean. "In reality, heart disease is the leading cause of death for both women and men in the United States. Ruth's experience

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is a great example of why it's so important for women to take the signs of a heart attack seriously."

The most obvious symptom of a heart attack is pressure, squeezing, fullness, or a stabbing pain in your chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. However, not all heart attacks are preceded by chest pain. In fact, only 54 percent of women report chest pain before a heart attack.

ACCORDING TO DR. JEAN, SOME OF THE LESS OBVIOUS SYMPTOMS OF A HEART ATTACK INCLUDE:

- Sudden weakness
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea or vomiting
- Indigestion
- Cold sweats
- Overall feeling of illness
- Unusual sensations or mild discomfort in the back, chest, arm, neck or jaw

In the years since her heart attack, Ruth is back to perfect health. She continues to see Dr. Jean for regular monitoring.

"Like a lot of women, I was always quick to respond to the demands of my job or the needs of my family, but I was less quick to pay attention to my own symptoms," she reflects. "My advice to other women would be: if something is not right, don't ignore it—head to the hospital."

Although she is still busy, Ruth now has a more relaxed outlook on life. "Life is too short to feel stressed," she says. She continues to run her company but is also enjoying new hobbies like language and music classes, working out in her home gym, and mastering new cooking techniques.

"I can't say enough good things about the compassionate, personalized care I've received from Dr. Jean and the team at MedStar Montgomery," she says. "Thanks to them, I'm still here—and I am going to make every day count." ◀◀

For more information about Cardiology at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, visit MedStarMontgomery.org/HealthyHeart. To make an appointment with Dr. Jean, call **855-218-2986**. You can also follow Dr. Jean on Instagram and Twitter as DrEstelleJean.

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