

Focused On You

WINTER 2021

Health News and Information from MedStar Montgomery Medical Center



Amazing COVID-19 recovery and a family changed forever

Inside: [The Emergency Department can help with stress-induced heart problems](#) | [How to stay healthy during COVID-19](#)
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A Season of Hope.



Since our last issue, we have welcomed many of you back to the hospital for elective procedures, preventative care, and other medical treatment as needed. We have safely resumed nearly all hospital services. However, as with the national trend, MedStar Montgomery is beginning to experience an increase in COVID-19 patients similar to what we experienced earlier in 2020.

As we approach the most recent (and hopefully the last) surge of the COVID-19 pandemic, our team at MedStar Montgomery remains vigilant yet hopeful about the future. We are well prepared as a hospital and a system as we have learned so much more about the disease. We have adequate PPE, testing is more widely available, new therapies are being implemented, and a vaccine is just now available.

We are also encouraged by the many stories of hope that surround us. In this issue of *Focused on You*, you'll be introduced to Ceasar Joyner, one of the first patients at MedStar Montgomery to be treated with anti-inflammatory therapies. Despite losing two loved ones to COVID-19 during his hospitalization, Ceasar fought the disease with valor and was able to return home to his wife and

newborn baby. In another set of moving stories, we feature four women under the age of 50 who all overcame breast cancer with the help of our Breast Health and Oncology teams.

Lastly, we pause to celebrate some of our front-line healthcare workers who make a difference in the lives of our patients and the community. They are your neighbors, family members, and friends who help to bring hope to our patients every day. We are grateful for their skills, knowledge, and compassion.

Above all, we are thankful to our community for the continued outpouring of support for our front-line healthcare workers during this challenging time. You offer us hope for today and for the future.

Our top ask of you is to continue to wear your mask, wash your hands, keep physical distance from those outside of your household, and limit your exposure to others in the community. Follow the CDC guidelines and do not delay medical care if needed.

Wishing you a new year of good health, wellness, and hope.

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Focused On You

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We remain
vigilant yet
hopeful
about the
future.

Stress-induced heart problems on the rise—when to head to the ED.

BY JENNIFER DAVIS

This hasn't been an easy year for Mary Kay Abramson. First the 62-year-old was furloughed from her job as a travel agent in April, and then in July, she stood up after cleaning one day and suddenly felt like her heart was going to rush out of her chest.



Mary Kay Abramson's heart function is now back to normal after dealing with stress-induced heart issues. She owes it all to the fast-acting ED team at MedStar Montgomery.

"Dr. Princewill and the ED doctors were wonderful."

— MARY KAY ABRAMSON

"I thought, whoa—what was that?" Mary Kay says. "Then I started to feel tightness behind my sternum. I never felt anything like this before and didn't know what was going on, but I knew I needed to go to the hospital."



Oluseyi Princewill, MD

Mary Kay's husband rushed her to MedStar Montgomery Medical Center where she was admitted for observation and tests. Cardiologist Oluseyi Princewill, MD, oversaw her care. "Dr. Princewill and the ED doctors were wonderful," Mary Kay explains. They were so helpful, attentive, and calming and they acted really quickly to figure out what was going on with me."

Despite the fact that she led an active lifestyle and had no prior heart conditions or blockages, two separate scans of Mary Kay's heart were consistent with a heart attack. Dr. Princewill says it's important to act quickly when a heart attack is a possibility because immediate treatment can slow or even stop damage to the heart. So she called for a medevac helicopter to fly Mary Kay to MedStar Washington Hospital Center in Washington, D.C., for further evaluation.

It took about seven minutes to reach the hospital. Rated among the top 20 heart centers in the country by *U.S. News & World Report*, the hospital is home to the MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute. Performing more than 19,000 catheterizations a year, the Institute is one of the most experienced cardiac catheterization centers in the U.S. When doctors performed the procedure on Mary Kay, they discovered she wasn't having a heart attack at all.

Instead, they found takotsubo cardiomyopathy. More commonly called broken heart syndrome, the condition involves rapid and severe cardiac dysfunction caused by intense emotional or physical stress. It is only diagnosable

by performing a cardiac catheterization. During this process, dye is injected to light up the heart. The good news: the dye revealed clear coronary arteries and no reduced blood flow or blockages.

Mary Kay's condition is not directly due to COVID-19, but it is stress-induced. Dr. Princewill says the Emergency Department has been seeing a fair number of cases like these during the pandemic. "When it happens, people can experience chest pain, shortness of breath, and other symptoms as if they were having a heart attack," says Dr. Princewill.

More good news for Mary Kay is that her cardiomyopathy was reversible. She rested for six weeks to help her heart heal. At her two-month follow-up visit with Dr. Princewill, she was told that her heart function was back to normal.

Mary Kay expects to be out of work another year, which contributes to her stress, but she's working hard to stay healthy and positive. "I'm trying to be more mindful of what stresses me out," she says. "I meditate, and continue to walk and exercise. I feel really good. I'm grateful they figured this out quickly, and relieved it wasn't a heart attack. They gave me answers and treatment so quickly. That reduced my stress tremendously."

Dr. Princewill says the lesson for others is: Don't delay if something feels wrong with your heart. "If you are having any symptoms of a heart attack, including chest pain or shortness of breath, please come into the ED right away," she urges. "We need to act quickly when your heart is involved to figure out what is really happening and provide the care you need." ◀

Call **301-570-7404** to request an appointment with one of our heart or vascular specialists.

Visit **MedStarMontgomery.org/ED** for more information about our emergency services.

Amazing COVID-19 recovery and a family changed forever.

BY SUSAN LAHOUT

The Joyner family expected 2020 to be an exciting and joyful year as they anticipated the birth of their daughter in May. However, life had different plans. On April 18, Ceasar's wife, Tonya, delivered Brielle via an emergency Caesarean section, and the baby was placed in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU).

Several days later, baby Brielle was healthy enough to be released from the NICU. It should have been a happy occasion for the family, but Tonya's grandmother, Annie Mae, who was living with the Joyners, developed a fever and was rushed to MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center. Shortly thereafter, Ceasar's Aunt Connie was also hospitalized with similar symptoms. Ultimately, both women died from complications of COVID-19.

Within days, Ceasar developed a fever, diarrhea, and shortness of breath. At the time, COVID-19 cases were surging across the United States, especially in Montgomery County, Maryland. Ceasar was initially taken to the MedStar Southern Maryland Emergency Department, but because that hospital was at capacity, he was transferred to MedStar Montgomery Medical Center. Throughout the pandemic, all MedStar Health facilities have worked collaboratively to support each other and fight the disease.

Ceasar's case was extremely serious because of his chronic underlying health conditions of diabetes, congestive heart failure, coronary artery disease, and high blood pressure.

But Ceasar is a fighter.

During his time in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), Ceasar's need for oxygen dramatically increased; the care team talked to his wife, Tonya, about the possibility of using a ventilator. The team wanted to avoid any ventilatory support, because it posed a grave risk: that Ceasar would never again be able to breathe on his own.

The team engineered ways to use multiple supplemental oxygen therapies to buy time for his lungs to heal. "Ceasar was among the first patients treated with anti-inflammatory therapies," reports Manu Kaushal, MD, Director of Critical Care at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center. "COVID-19



Ceasar Joyner, who battled a very serious case of COVID-19 in April, is grateful for the lifesaving care he received at MedStar Montgomery. Now he is back to his life with his wife, Tonya, and daughter, Brielle.

is an unpredictable, deadly virus, something the medical community has never experienced. Our therapeutic approach is a constant process of learning and adapting new strategies, implementing protocols as we gather evidence to treat the disease. Our ability to pivot and try new therapies helped Ceasar make small gains over the disease," Dr. Kaushal says.

However, as the disease progressed, Ceasar's kidneys failed, and when he was placed on dialysis, his blood pressure dropped. Ceasar's care team diligently worked to keep him alive and after nine days in the ICU, he began to feel better. "I know there were many nurses and doctors that took great care of me," Ceasar recalls. "They put notes on the window near my bed to let me know my wife called and that she and Brielle loved me."

By day 12, Ceasar was transferred out of the ICU, but his fight was far from over. He continued to have breathing issues and weakness, and needed physical therapy to relearn how to walk. Unfortunately,

"They put notes on the window near my bed to let me know my wife called and that she and Brielle loved me."

– CEASAR JOYNER

rehabilitation facilities were not accepting COVID-19 patients. "I have to give credit to my MedStar Montgomery colleagues who formed a special mobility team for patients with COVID-19," says Dr. Kaushal. "Our teams worked very closely with these patients, and our respiratory and physical therapists are the real unsung heroes."



Manu Kaushal, MD

Dr. Kaushal emphasizes that Cesar's consistent positive attitude, unwavering faith in God, immense support from his family, and the dedicated work of his care team were key to his recovery. "Our team at MedStar Montgomery is small, but mighty," explains Dr. Kaushal. "Complicated cases like Cesar's would generally be transferred to bigger facilities, but with the ICU team's hard work we were able to pull him out of the crisis." He further emphasizes, "We continue to care for many critically ill patients during this pandemic and have learned and adapted protocols to increase the number of successful outcomes."

After 21 days in the hospital, Cesar was released with a big send-off. His recovery boosted the morale of everyone involved.

Six months after discharge, Cesar continues to experience some lingering common issues for COVID-19 patients. Otherwise, he is doing well, no longer needs dialysis, and is glad to be back home with his biggest supporter, his wife Tonya. And he finally gets to hold his beautiful baby daughter, Brielle, who is doing great. "I am so grateful for the care I received at MedStar Montgomery and I truly believe that if I had not gone there for my care, I would not be here today to share my story," Cesar says with clear relief. ◀◀

Visit [MedStarHealth.org/COVID-19](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/COVID-19) to learn more about our COVID-19 symptom checker and to access additional information and resources.

Staying healthy tips during the COVID-19 pandemic.

BY SUSAN LAHOUT

Nearly ten months into the COVID-19 pandemic, MedStar Montgomery Medical Center clinicians remain prepared to accurately screen for risk of COVID-19 and respond immediately to prevent further spread.

For those with ongoing medical issues, it is important to stay in touch with your primary care physician and take medications as prescribed.

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is the single best way to naturally keep your immune system strong. Every part of the body benefits from regular exercise, a well-balanced diet, sleep, and stress management.

Deborah Perry, RN, CIC, VA-BC, infection preventionist at MedStar Montgomery, shares some tips below on how to make healthy choices to support your immune system. "Taking care of yourself during these challenging times is important and not entirely different from pre-COVID-19, with the exception of wearing masks in public and physical distancing," explains Deborah.

Maintain physical health

Regular exercise is key to healthy living. It helps control body weight, lowers blood pressure, and can protect against certain diseases. "Enjoying a brisk stroll, taking a hike, or gardening can help you maintain both your physical and mental health," Deborah says. "Bike riding has become more popular during the pandemic, as people look for new ways to get some exercise and have fun outdoors."

Choose healthier foods

As people remain indoors and practice physical distancing, there is a surge in the demand for meal delivery. Spending on takeout delivery services is up 70% and the average order size is up 24%.

While it is great to support our local restaurants, eating lean protein and vitamin-rich vegetables and avoiding fried foods and sugar may help boost a healthy immune system. Now is a good time to pick up fresh produce and have it ready in your refrigerator for healthy snacks.

Lower your stress

"We are all experiencing a lack of contact with both friends and loved ones, which can lower our day-to-day enjoyment. Front-line workers are under an extreme amount of stress as they do their jobs," Deborah says. "Managing stress is essential for everyone." Sometimes it is difficult to know when to push that "stop" button.

Consistently having a good night's sleep is critical to lowering stress and supporting your immune system. Try some of the many online resources available to support a stress-free sleep, such as meditation apps and mindfulness podcasts.

By maintaining a healthy lifestyle, you are helping support your immune system during the COVID-19 pandemic. MedStar Montgomery is here for you every step of the way. Remember, you are not alone; we are in this together. ◀◀



Devon Cumberbatch was shocked when she was diagnosed with breast cancer at only 34, but she found a new family with the care team at MedStar Montgomery.

Hear her story: [MedStarMontgomery.org/Devon](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/Devon)



Kim Wells, 49, is so grateful for her husband, Greg, who urged her to get checked for breast cancer, and for the care and support of the team at MedStar Montgomery.

Hear her story: [MedStarMontgomery.org/Kim](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/Kim)

Too young for breast cancer? Three women share their stories.

BY KATIE PARADIS

Devon Cumberbatch was preparing to play a concert in New York. Kim Wells was recently married. Tufor Tenny had a young son. Each woman had a busy life and so many plans. Battling breast cancer wasn't one of them.

October was Breast Cancer Awareness Month—an annual campaign to increase awareness of the disease, promote prevention, and improve treatment. But as Devon, Kim, and Tufor know too well, cancer doesn't care about dates on the calendar. It doesn't care about plans, and it doesn't care about age. They are three of the approximately 11,000 women under 50 who are diagnosed with breast cancer each year in the United States.

"I was shocked," says Devon, a grant writer from Silver Spring, Maryland, who was diagnosed in September 2019 at the age of 34. "When I went to my doctor for a lump in my right breast, I wasn't thinking cancer at all."

Tufor, a 37-year-old accountant from Gaithersburg, Maryland, agrees: "When you're young, you think, 'that's never going to happen to me.'"

Tufor felt the lump in her left breast in spring 2019, but had a history of fibroids and wasn't too concerned.

"I had a lump that would come and go," she says. "Then one day it came, and it never left."

Tufor also put off getting checked because she feared taking time from her new job for medical appointments, but a coworker convinced her to see a doctor.

It was a similar situation for Kim, 49, a clinical social worker from western Howard County.

"I'd always had a lump," Kim says. "But the pain was new." It was Kim's husband, Greg, who urged her to get checked.

"I come from a family of physicians," Greg says. "I've learned that if something doesn't feel right, it's not right." Kim was diagnosed the day before Christmas in 2019.

Following their breast cancer diagnoses, all three women chose MedStar Montgomery Medical Center for their treatment and care. They each elected to undergo mastectomies.



Behzad Doratotaj, MD

The Breast Health program at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center provides a comprehensive, specialized approach to caring for each patient, including state-of-the-art infusion and oral treatments, targeted radiation therapies, leading-edge breast-conserving surgical techniques, genetic counseling, and social services.



Tufor Tenny, 37, pictured with her son, encourages other women to do self-exams regularly and not to delay care when you know something is wrong.

Hear her story: [MedStarMontgomery.org/Tufor](https://www.medstar-montgomery.org/Tufor)

"Our team fully supports our patients in making decisions," says Behzad Doratotaj, MD, Chief of Medical Oncology and Infusion at MedStar Montgomery. "We want them to know that we are their closest allies in this journey." The clinical team provides individual education and support for every patient—something for which Devon, Kim, and Tufor are extremely grateful.

"I can't tell you how much I felt cared for," says Kim of her care team at MedStar Montgomery. "And Dr. Doratotaj is one of kindest men I've ever met."

"It's almost like you were cared for by family," adds Devon.

Each woman credits the support they received from the MedStar Montgomery care teams, as well as their families and friends, for helping them through the struggles that can accompany cancer treatment, including hair loss, fatigue, fertility preservation, and emotional and psychological pain.

"Cancer wasn't in my life plan," Kim says. "But when I walked into MedStar Montgomery, I knew this is where I was supposed to be."

In addition, all three women stress the importance of taking care of yourself and advocating for your own health. "I cannot say it enough: Do your self-exams regularly," urges Tufor. ◀◀

To learn more about MedStar Health's Breast Health services at MedStar Montgomery, visit [MedStarMontgomery.org/BreastHealth](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/BreastHealth) or call 301-260-3301.

Mammographer urges annual screenings following her experience with breast cancer.

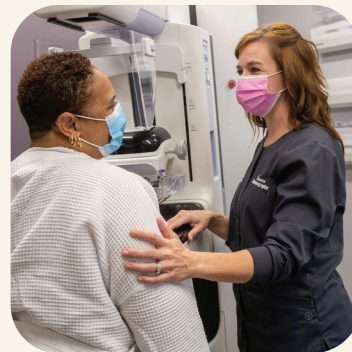
Laura Stottlemyer knows that mammograms aren't popular. The mammography technologist at MedStar Breast Health & Imaging Center at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center also knows that many women, especially young women with no family history of breast cancer, may delay the screening because they feel they're not at risk of getting the disease. Laura was one of those women—until she was diagnosed at the age of 32.

"I not only understand breast cancer from a professional perspective," Laura says. "I've lived it."

Laura was a healthy and busy working mother who had no family history of breast cancer when she felt a pain in her right breast in 2007.

"It was a very specific pain," she says. "I could literally put my finger on it."

Laura performed self-exams regularly but says the sharp pain was her body's way of telling her to pay closer attention to that specific area of her breast.



Laura Stottlemyer, mammography technologist at MedStar Montgomery, is a breast cancer survivor.

After her diagnosis, Laura underwent a lumpectomy followed by chemotherapy and radiation. Cancer-free for 13 years, Laura often shares her story with her patients.

"A lot of patients tell me, 'I'm not concerned because I don't have a family

history,'" she says. "While family history can play a huge part, it's not the main contributor, as 75% of those diagnosed with breast cancer have no family history."

The American Cancer Society recommends that women have the choice to start annual breast cancer screenings at 40 and that all women should receive annual mammograms starting at 45.

"Early detection is key because if breast cancer is caught early enough, we see a 99% treatment success rate," Laura explains. "As a mammographer, I know that if we don't get it right for the radiologist, then they can't diagnose it. That's a huge responsibility, so being able to get the best exam possible is something I take a great deal of pride in."

"I know no one likes mammograms," Laura laughs. "But I try to make it as comfortable an experience as I can." ◀◀

Our healthcare heroes: rising to the challenge.

BY CARRIE BISHOP

As front-line defense against COVID-19, they are the calm in the chaos, providing an extraordinary level of patient-centered care with urgency, intelligence, and compassion. We are so thankful for their service. Meet a few of our healthcare heroes at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center.

Treating the whole patient: Manu Kaushal, MD, Pulmonologist



Manu Kaushal, MD

As director of Critical Care and the Pulmonary clinic, Dr. Kaushal often cares for the sickest patients in the hospital's Intensive Care Unit (ICU)—but never so many at one time as the pandemic brought. At the onset of the pandemic, his ICU was at double and triple capacity. "We were knee-deep as soon as we saw the first patients," he recalls. From therapeutics to policies, the seriousness

and unknowns the novel virus brought to healthcare systems worldwide required Dr. Kaushal and his staff to function in a constant state of learning and adaptation.

He was also acutely aware that patients were battling an unknown disease in isolation, as no families were allowed into the ICU. Daily, he would call a family member for each of his 12 to 18 patients. "We would prepare them for the worst, but still give them some hope," he says. "There was nothing predictable about this disease at the outset. That was the hardest part."

To help ease patients' anxieties, his team orchestrated video chats with families, created homemade posters meaningful to each patient, and even painted a mural in the ICU to honor every COVID-19 patient who was treated there.

"Every one of us took a very personal interest in every patient and tried to treat each medically, spiritually, and emotionally," says Dr. Kaushal.

The importance of a smile:

Lauren Sundergill, RN



Lauren Sundergill, RN

When the pandemic hit, and while she was studying to be a psychiatric nurse practitioner, Lauren Sundergill voluntarily redeployed to the ICU for four 12-hour shifts a week. "I felt inside of me that this was something I had to do," she explains.

She paid close attention to the emotional challenges of the patients, who often felt alone and anxious. "I knew I could be of use, and I wanted to help," she says.

For six months, Lauren helped calm and care for those ICU patients as they faced a new virus without loved ones nearby. "I'm just really proud of the work everybody did in the hospital," she says. "Everyone worked hard and came together. The entire team did a really good job providing care."

Grateful for her unique care, many of the families Lauren came to know still connect with her today.

Team coordination is critical:

**Courtney Cline, Coordinator of
Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation**



Courtney Cline

Courtney Cline has always had an interest in project management, logistics, and operations. When her department suspended operations in mid-March, she was tapped to spearhead staff redeployment throughout the hospital. She was then asked to oversee visitor and associate screenings, including figuring out how to screen, since the novel virus presented new challenges.

She used triage and advanced medical tents for potential Emergency Department overflow. Then came the rewriting of grants and PPE inventory control for Emergency Management. She also was an integral part of rolling out the new pre-surgical COVID-19 testing service.

"It's been a crazy, bumpy ride, but I've learned a ton," Courtney remembers. "I didn't want to let anyone down. I didn't want to impact patient care. Our number one priority was to maintain a high level of patient care during the pandemic, and I think we did," she says.

Keep everything moving:
leisha Dunston, Sterile Processing
Supervisor, Performance Improvement Fellow

leisha Dunston, with expertise in sterile processing, proved she was open, flexible, and resilient during her pandemic-related redeployment to the linen department. Her skillful, analytical problem-solving helped standardize the linen processes. She made sure the team was organized and ran smoothly so it could meet the mounting demand for clean sheets, gowns, and other essentials. "It was an eye-opening experience, and it made me understand teamwork better," she says. "The linen department plays an important role in the hospital. Without them, we couldn't do anything. I appreciate their work so much."



leisha Dunston

Beyond her immediate tasks, she feels MedStar Montgomery overall has done an excellent job at responding to the crisis. "It was safe and secure, and the hospital always had both the medical teams' interests and our patients' best interests at heart," says leisha. "We had the tools and resources we needed, and we pulled together. You could see the synergy."

Readiness to go the distance:
Kiersten Henry, Nurse Practitioner
and Chief Advanced Practice Clinician

Working in the ICU was not unusual for Kiersten Henry, who easily toggles between administrative and clinical roles. Yet, this year, the sheer volume of ICU patients and the need to become an expert in therapies like prone positioning, which prior to the pandemic she used infrequently, were highly unusual. So was treating patients without the in-person support of their families.



**Kiersten Henry, DNP,
ACNP-BC, CCNS,
CCRN-CMC**

"Everything shows that it's better for patients to have family visit, and then COVID-19 hit and no family could come," says Kiersten. Some patients were in the ICU 30 to 40 days, so she and others took on the responsibility of communicating with families and providing emotional care to the patients, many of whom had been on sedatives for weeks and were confused.

"We got back to our Florence Nightingale roots," she says. The team thought about what—besides medical treatment—helps heal. They turned patients toward the window so they could see outside. They placed pictures of loved ones on posters to help create human

"Every one of us took a very personal interest in every patient..."

— DR. MANU KAUSHAL

connection. They shaved patients' beards. They talked with families and provided the reassurance they so needed. And they took care of one another.

"Within the ICU, we are our own best support system," Kiersten explains. "This experience has been described as a marathon, but it feels like when we finally reach mile 25, the finish line moves further away. It's a constant feeling that we're going to surge again, so we maintain a constant readiness."

Safety procedures in ambiguous times:
Deborah L. Perry, Infection Preventionist, RN,
CIC, VA-BC

As the hospital's only infection preventionist, Deborah Perry worked around the clock the first several weeks the pandemic hit MedStar Montgomery's patient community. She was a core part of the team that created the best practices, procedures, and guidelines to ensure patient and staff safety as it related to COVID-19. At the time, and even now, the pandemic was ever-evolving. Testing was changing course. Practices were being updated. There was a seemingly endless list of unknowns.



**Deborah L. Perry, RN,
CIC, VA-BC**

Among her roles, Deborah collaborated closely with the supply chain team and MedStar Montgomery leadership on the conservation of PPE. "We've always had a sufficient supply of PPE, but in order to maintain that supply, we developed safe conservation methods to ensure our staff had the protective gear they needed," she says.

She looks back on the critical early days of the pandemic and is proud of the teamwork displayed throughout MedStar Health. "The resilience of the associates here and the teamwork have been absolutely incredible," says Deborah. "It's amazing how much we can get done and take on when we all work together." ◀◀

Community class schedule.



Online live classes are available for our seniors and parents in the community.



Senior classes

- Senior Strength and Balance Fitness Class (free), 10 a.m., Mondays and Wednesdays

Parenting classes

- Childbirth Express: \$75
- Lamaze Technique: \$60
- Infant Care: \$30
See also: Breastfeeding Support Group
- Breastfeeding Basics: \$35
- Breastfeeding Support Group (free), 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., Thursdays

For full descriptions, or to learn more about dates and times, visit [MedStarMontgomery.org/Classes](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/Classes) or call 301-774-8881 (Option 4).

Community classes bring amazing results: **Mary's testimonial.**

I'm so grateful to MedStar Montgomery for the excellent community classes. I want to share my story and my great results that have really impacted my life and health.

I am a retired maternity RN and lactation consultant. I just turned 69 in October, and I have been overweight/medically obese for the last 30 years. A couple of car accidents, an Achilles tear/repair, and birth delivery complications have all impacted my health and activities, resulting in my obesity issues. I also had several retinal detachments, and I'm now legally blind in my left eye.

Over the past seven years, I have learned as much as I could about organics, non-GMO, alkaline, and anti-inflammatory foods that have made my kitchen my new medicine cabinet. My diet has really impacted my life and health for the better.

Last year, I recognized that I needed to take steps to turn my health and activity level in the opposite direction, so I enrolled in the MedStar Montgomery tai chi class at Longwood Community Center. I walked out a different person with continued marked improvement in my balance. I soon joined a Zumba class and saw an improvement in my strength and endurance.

Since joining these classes and being taught the correct positions and form, I have had the most amazing results. I have lost three

and a half inches on my thighs, and I can now do squats even with arthritis in both knees! I can stand from a seated position without pushing off on the chair's arms. Also, I can now put my pants on without having to sit down.

I can carry heavy things in one hand, bring them into the house from the car, and not be exhausted. I have actually gained new definition in my arms. And my balance has improved. I can climb or descend staircases without holding onto the railings. Flexibility in my neck, shoulders, arms, and back has improved markedly as well. I have lost 50 pounds in total from intermittent fasting, and consistent exercising has sped up that weight loss.

So, with these remarkable improvements, I decided to do legs, shoulders, biceps, triceps, balance exercises, stretches, and meditation six to seven times a week. With my newfound determination, strength, flexibility, and encouraging results from "pulling those abdominals in," I'm looking forward to reaching my goal weight with better health, balance, and strength. God bless the community class instructors at MedStar Montgomery, including Mary Jo Cosgrove, for all that you do for so many!
—Mary Gallagher



Mary Gallagher, 69, lost 50 pounds and is in the best shape she's been in since her late 30s.

Your expressions of gratitude matter.

Expressions of gratitude can be beneficial to both the patient and caregiver. Patients who have received care often want to give back to the team in some capacity to say thank you. For many, expressing their gratitude to the team can be an essential part of the healing process after a tragedy.



Your gratitude can have a positive effect on our caregivers as well. We have heard from countless doctors, nurses, and therapists over the years who indicated that receiving a heartfelt "thank you" brightened their day.

The following are just a couple of many recent expressions of gratitude from our patients:

"Gratefulness is a complex feeling, one that carries so much appreciation and humility for the medical skills and teamwork that brought me through this crisis. Yet it's on me now to do what's possible to sustain the healing and celebrate the life that I now live."

- KATHERINE FARQUHAR, PhD
Chair, MedStar Montgomery
Medical Center Board of Directors

"I knew my patients and family members were in good hands wherever they went within the MedStar Health network. Now, having been a patient, I experienced for myself the compassionate treatment others have had. This personal experience really affirmed our decision to donate. It also confirmed their reputation. The MedStar Health family is a good group of people doing great things."

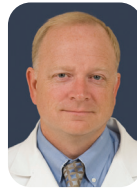
- MIKE AND SANDY BERNA

To share your gratitude for your caregiver, please contact Tiffany Brett at **301-774-8636** or **tiffany.l.brett@medstar.net**.

Welcoming our new providers.

MedStar Montgomery Medical Center

To schedule an appointment, please call 301-856-2323.



Robert Bryan Mason, MD,
Neurosurgery

MedStar Breast Health & Imaging Center

To schedule an appointment, please call 301-260-3292.



Jennifer Son, MD,
Breast Surgery



Robert Howard, MD,
Plastic Surgery

MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute

To schedule an appointment, please call 301-774-8697.



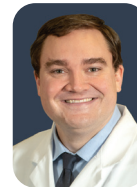
Nora Sudarsan, DO,
Hematology,
Medical Oncology

MedStar Montgomery Addiction & Mental Health Center

To schedule an appointment, please call 301-774-8860.



Aronica Cotton, MD,
Adolescent
Psychiatry



Jacob Swartz, MD,
Psychiatry

MedStar Orthopaedic Institute

To schedule an appointment, please call 301-774-8958.



Jason Hammond, MD,
Sports
Medicine



Thomas Ring, MD,
Joint
Surgery



Farhang Alaei, MD,
Joint
Surgery

MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute

To schedule an appointment, please call 301-774-8962.



Kyle Reynolds, MD,
Vascular Surgery

Welcome back.

We are safe and ready to serve you. The safety of our patients will always be our top priority.

Now, we're taking extra precautions to help you feel at ease during your care. Each member of our team is focused on keeping you and your loved ones safe. Here's what you can expect:



Safe providers: Our physicians, nurses, and other healthcare team members use the proper safety gear to protect themselves and you to keep everyone healthy.



Masking: All patients and visitors are expected to wear a mask during their visit, regardless of symptoms. We will provide one for you, if needed.



Cleaning and disinfecting: We thoroughly sanitize and disinfect all patient exam, waiting, and procedure rooms multiple times each day.



Hand sanitizing: Hand sanitizer dispensing stations are available throughout every facility.



Staggered appointments: We are carefully managing our schedules to minimize the number of people coming through our waiting rooms at one time.



Screening patients and visitors: We are screening all patients and approved visitors for symptoms at every hospital and medical office location.



Physical distancing: While inside our facilities, we'll help you practice physical distancing with floor markers, signage, and reconfigured waiting areas.

You will never feel socially distant. MedStar Health associates care about you. Our mantra—It's how we treat people—is what drives us all to do what we do.

Visit [MedStarHealth.org](https://www.MedStarHealth.org)
for more information.



MedStar Health

It's how we treat people.