

FOCUSED ON YOU



MedStar Montgomery
Medical Center

MedStarMontgomery.org

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Named Center of Excellence

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**NEW
INITIATIVES
PROMOTE
HEALTHY
PATIENTS &
COMMUNITY**

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From the President

DEAR FRIENDS,

First and foremost, I want to thank you for your generosity and warm welcome over the past few months as I continue to transition into my role as president of MedStar Montgomery Medical Center.

As I get to know our community and its needs better, I am committed to maintaining the hospital's legacy of exceptional care, while looking for ways to innovate and continually improve our services to meet new challenges and provide the best care for all patients.

Here at MedStar Montgomery, our doctors, nurses, staff and volunteers are always working to enhance our facilities and services. As we find ourselves nearing the end of summer, I hope that you have been able to enjoy some time off to travel or visit with friends and family – but rest assured, we have been hard at work.

Physical improvements to our campus, including our lobby renovation and parking lot paving, will make hospital arrival easy for patients and their families. Once here, patients will appreciate a new imaging room for faster diagnosis in the Emergency Department; plus, this fall, you will be able to experience a refreshed Maternal Newborn Center, where families welcome our hospital's newest and most precious patients in private rooms.

New health initiatives also provide our community members with greater access to expert comprehensive care. Our new partnership with the Olney Boys and Girls Club will connect athletes, coaches and families to MedStar Health experts in injury prevention, management and education. Our new Center for Integrative Medicine is designed to improve patient outcomes by combining conventional medicine with patient-centered care for the whole person (see page 5).

As always, we are here for all of your healthcare needs. Whether you bring an emergency, like Ersilia, who made a recovery after congestive heart failure (see page 6), or a chronic condition, like Susan, whose health was transformed following bariatric surgery (see page 3), you will be treated by our expert clinicians working together to provide you with the best care possible to get you back to your healthiest self.

Yours in good health,

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

MEDSTAR MONTGOMERY MEDICAL CENTER UPCOMING CLASSES

FITNESS

Gentle Flow Yoga for Seniors
Learn a variety of yoga poses to increase strength, balance and flexibility.
Fee: \$40 per eight-week session

Beginning & Intermediate Yoga
Learn the physical and mental exercise that brings the body and mind together.
Fee: \$60 per six-week session

DIABETES CLASSES

Diabetes Self-Management
Learn how to better manage your diabetes with tips on self-care, healthy eating and being active.
Fee: \$40 per two-week session

Pre-Diabetes
Learn about pre-diabetes and preventing type 2 diabetes.
Fee: \$40 per two-week session

NURSING OPEN HOUSE

Interview for a nursing position in:
Medical Surgical-Oncology
Medical Surgical-Orthopaedics
Intensive Care Unit/IMC
Labor and Delivery
Emergency Department
Surgical Services-Operating Room

Saturday, 9/24 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Wednesday, 9/28 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Visit MedStarMontgomery.org/Classes for the full list of classes and events and to register for an upcoming class or seminar.

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**MedStar Montgomery
Medical Center**

Knowledge and Compassion **Focused on You**

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Improving Overall Health with Bariatric Surgery

Susan Palmisano of Damascus, Md., says her life changed when she went to the mailbox one day in 2013. She received a newsletter from MedStar Montgomery Medical Center and read an article about weight loss surgery.

At the time, Susan weighed 255 pounds and was taking medication for high blood pressure, high cholesterol and type 2 diabetes. The article inspired her to attend a free seminar at MedStar Montgomery with John Brebbia, MD, director of bariatric surgery.

"I did so many diets in the past," says Susan, now 60 years old. "I tried it all. I'd lose 50 or 60 pounds and then gain 80 or 90 back. I wanted change."



John Brebbia, MD

At the seminar, Susan learned about support groups, exercise programs, and other non-surgical interventions offered in the MedStar Montgomery bariatric program, which was recently designated as a Center of Excellence. Dr. Brebbia also discussed life-changing surgical options such as gastric bypass, sleeve gastrectomy and Lap-Band® surgery.

"Our goal with weight loss surgery is ultimately to take care of medical issues," Dr. Brebbia explains. "It's a side benefit that people lose a lot of weight. The most important thing is that we are making people healthier by preventing, treating or curing weight-related medical problems. This changes people's lives."

Together, Susan and Dr. Brebbia decided laparoscopic adjustable gastric banding, or Lap-Band® surgery, was best for her.

"During the procedure an adjustable band is placed around the stomach, which reduces its capacity, restricting the amount of food you are able to eat at one time," Dr. Brebbia explains.



Following Lap-Band® surgery, Susan has lost 115 pounds, is no longer taking medications for multiple comorbidities and has inspired her husband to seek out weight loss surgery.

"I liked that Lap-Band® was less invasive than other surgical options, the band was adjustable and recovery was shorter," Susan says.

The procedure was performed in December 2013. Susan missed just four days of work and started losing weight immediately. Dr. Brebbia says bariatric surgery can help reduce complications from sleep apnea, depression, heart disease, weight-related infertility and more. Susan says she noticed multiple benefits.

In the nine months following Susan's surgery, she lost 115 pounds, dropping from a size 22 to a size eight. "That part was fun," she says. "But more importantly, I was able to stop taking all medications for my diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure. It was incredible."

Susan has drastically changed the way she eats, but doesn't view it as a diet. "You don't want to fill up on junk," she says. "I have changed the way I think about food. I want to be healthy. I don't want to go back where I was."

Two years later, she has kept the weight off and inspired her husband to seek out weight loss surgery at MedStar Montgomery, too. He had the sleeve gastrectomy and has lost 60 pounds and counting.

"Weight that has been with me my whole life is now gone," Susan says. "I feel better than I felt in my 30s and 40s. I hope someone else hears my story and is inspired in the same way I was. My only regret is, why didn't I do this sooner?" <<

To learn more about our monthly weight loss seminars, visit MedStarMontgomery.org/Classes. Seminars are free, but registration is required.



Rebuilding an Active Life: Minimally Invasive Procedures Repair Pelvic Organ Prolapse

Joy and Jim Bird's long history with MedStar Montgomery made the hospital an obvious choice for surgical treatment of pelvic organ prolapse, performed by Robert Gutman, MD.

Seventy-seven-year-old Ruth "Joy" Bird is Maryland "born and raised – a farm girl," she says. As a girl, she lived an ideal rural life on the Warfield family farm in Howard County. And that country life also featured a country doctor – Jacob Wheeler Bird, MD.

Dr. Bird was the pioneering physician who came to Sandy Spring, Md., in a horse and buggy in 1909 to practice medicine. In 1918, he opened the area's first hospital – at the time Montgomery General Hospital, now MedStar Montgomery Medical Center.

"Dr. Bird was our general physician and took care of the whole family," says Joy. "MedStar Montgomery has been my hospital all my life. I even married Dr. Bird's youngest son, James!"

So when the nagging discomfort of pelvic organ prolapse became more than she could tolerate, Joy's hospital choice was a simple one. "I went to see Dr. Gutman at MedStar Montgomery on my daughter's

recommendation, and I'm so glad I did," Joy says.

SPECIALIZED EXPERTISE

Robert Gutman, MD, is a board-certified urogynecologist and a specialist in female pelvic medicine and reconstructive surgery.



Robert Gutman, MD

a fairly common disorder. Many people don't have symptoms. Others become very uncomfortable, and their quality of life is affected."

Joy had surgery decades ago to repair a prolapsed bladder – an open surgery that ultimately failed, causing chronic discomfort for years. "Today, we have new surgical

techniques, including a number of minimally invasive procedures," says Dr. Gutman. "I perform more than 200 pelvic reconstructive surgeries every year."

"Dr. Gutman explained five treatment options and encouraged me to make the choice that best suited me," Joy says.

MINIMALLY INVASIVE SURGERY

In March 2015, Dr. Gutman performed a robot-assisted laparoscopic sacrocolpopexy – surgery that is performed through small incisions using a telescope, real-time video and robotic instruments.

"Healthy women are good candidates for this procedure no matter their age," says Dr. Gutman. "At MedStar Montgomery, most of the procedures I perform are laparoscopic and robotic, with faster recovery, less pain and lower risk of infection for patients."

"Dr. Gutman is an outstanding doctor – I just love him!" Joy says enthusiastically. Now pain-free and feeling great, the active retiree and her husband, "Bird," are busy "doing whatever we want!" <<

To schedule an appointment with Robert Gutman, MD, at his Rockville, Md., office, call **301-984-1870**.

NEW INITIATIVES PROMOTE HEALTHY PATIENTS AND A HEALTHY COMMUNITY



Emily Ratner, MD, is the medical director of the MedStar Health Center for Integrative Medicine.

CENTER FOR INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE NOW OPEN AT MEDSTAR MONTGOMERY

MedStar Montgomery Medical Center has launched the Center for Integrative Medicine, a new initiative designed to improve patient outcomes by treating the whole person.

Integrative medicine combines traditional healing with modern conventional medical practices and has proven to be beneficial in the treatment of many conditions – from cancer to orthopaedic disorders to women’s health concerns. The approach takes into account physical symptoms, along with the psychological, social and spiritual impact a condition may have on a person.

“The use of integrative medicine is rooted in the desire to improve patient care, and the practice is growing nationwide,” explains Emily Ratner, MD, director of the new center. “It’s an approach to care that puts the patient at the center and addresses the full range of physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual, and environmental influences that affect a person’s health.”

For a complete list of services the Center is currently offering, visit [MedStarMontgomery.org/Healthy](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/Healthy) or call **855-546-0946** to make an appointment.

OLNEY BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB FINDS COMMUNITY PARTNER IN MEDSTAR HEALTH

MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, in conjunction with MedStar Sports Medicine and the MedStar National Rehabilitation Network, has established a partnership with the Olney Boys and Girls Club to bring many of the region’s top experts to help prevent and manage young athletes’ sports injuries.

The Olney Boys and Girls Club offers children of all ages the opportunity to learn and participate in popular summer camps.

“The Olney Boys and Girls Club is delighted to partner with MedStar Health. It’s a partnership that will add value to the services we offer and truly benefit the local community,” says Ken Bradford, executive director of the Olney Boys and Girls Club. “This partnership will help parents, coaches and athletes prevent injuries, promote healthy



lifestyles, and when the need arises, enable parents to obtain the best care in sports medicine for their children.”

In addition to working directly with the young athletes and their coaches at the club, MedStar Health experts will offer a variety of seminars, lectures and screenings, including Lifestyle Wellness and Nutrition, ACL injuries and more.

“We have been a proud supporter of the Olney Boys and Girls Club for many years,” notes Thomas J. Senker, FACHE, president, MedStar Montgomery and senior vice president, MedStar Health. “It’s a fantastic organization that makes a difference in young people’s lives in our community every day, and we are excited to further strengthen our relationship through this partnership.”

Visit [MedStarMontgomery.org/OlneyBoysGirlsClub](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/OlneyBoysGirlsClub) for more information or to register for one of the upcoming health seminars.



Ersilia has recovered from congestive heart failure and is back to gardening. Quick action and treatment by Tareq Massimi, MD, saved her life.

Lifesaving Vascular Treatment in a Heartbeat

Sixty-seven-year-old Ersilia Lappa, of Silver Spring, Md., is not fond of hospitals. She is usually one to dodge doctors and medical appointments whenever she can and, like many people, does not like needles.

But that changed one night in December 2014, when Ersilia became dangerously ill and needed to rely upon the expertise and quick decision-making of her doctors.

Suddenly short of breath and having trouble staying awake, Ersilia was urged by friends to go immediately to the nearby Emergency Department at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center. "The tests showed I was in congestive heart failure," Ersilia recalls. "All my organ systems began to shut down."

She was admitted to MedStar Montgomery, where MedStar Heart and Vascular Institute vascular surgeon Tareq Massimi, MD, took over Ersilia's care. She was overwhelmed by how quickly her health was failing.

"Dr. Massimi told me I had a large blood clot in my lung and explained that it needed to be treated immediately or my heart would fail," Ersilia says. "I was scared. I wanted to wait until my family arrived to make a decision, but Dr. Massimi put me at ease. He explained everything plainly, and I trusted him."

Ersilia was experiencing the effects of a pulmonary embolism – a large blood clot that usually migrates from leg or pelvic veins into the lungs. Although most of these types of blood clots don't cause symptoms and can be treated with blood-thinning medication once they are detected, larger clots can cause a sudden and severe increase in pressure in the lungs, which can lead to heart failure.

"Relatively recently, we started to treat these large clots with clot-busting medicine, known as tPA," explains Dr. Massimi. "It helps dissolve the clot and relieves the pressure on the heart." Ersilia's pulmonary embolism was easily dissolved with tPA. She awoke with only brief, mild discomfort.



**Tareq
Massimi, MD**

"Treatment with tPA for pulmonary embolism isn't standardized yet," says Dr. Massimi. "Certain patients, like Ersilia, can really benefit from this kind of treatment because it also reduces the risk of heart failure in the future."

Ersilia also had atherosclerosis, or an accumulation of plaque inside the arteries, and multiple aneurysms, where weakened artery walls widen abnormally, like a balloon, and can burst. The aneurysms required complex repair by Dr. Massimi using advanced technology available at partner hospital MedStar Washington Hospital Center, where Ersilia was treated once her health stabilized.

"It's fortunate that Ersilia was in the MedStar system," says Dr. Massimi. "We can tailor our interventions with a simple approach, or use a more complex approach that requires advanced technology to evaluate and treat this disease when needed."

Ersilia is doing well and is back to working in her garden. She won't need another checkup for six months.

"Now, when Dr. Massimi tells me he needs to see me, I'm on it right away," says Ersilia. "I trust him to know what's best for me and am so grateful he got me into the operating room when he did." <<

To make an appointment with one of our vascular surgeons, call **855-546-1826**.

Back in the Saddle: Riding High After Severe Injury

Debbie Bernhardt normally leads an incredibly active life as a high school photography teacher, professional photographer, wife, mother and horse farm owner. Yet all that came to a screeching halt last December when she fell in her barn, landing on the only section of the floor not covered in rubber matting.

An ambulance took her straight to the Emergency Department at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center where she learned she had fractured and dislocated both elbows.

"It was a horrendous trauma, requiring complex surgery to fix two of the worst types of elbow injuries a patient can sustain," says Alison Kitay, MD, orthopaedic surgeon and chief of hand surgery at MedStar Montgomery.



Alison Kitay, MD

That's because Debbie's injuries posed competing issues for treatment. The dislocated and unstable elbow needed to be immobilized in a fixed position to give the repaired ligaments time to heal. But to ensure that 55-year-old Debbie would regain functional movement in her elbow – stiffness occurs with all traumatic elbow injuries – her surgical solution needed to be robust enough for her to start physical rehabilitation as soon as possible.

"It's a challenge," acknowledges Dr. Kitay. "You need to fix the elbow fracture/dislocation in such a way that it's stable enough to allow for early motion and therapy."

While breaks in the hand and wrist are fairly common, complex elbow injuries like Debbie's are not. Fortunately, Dr. Kitay had exactly the experience Debbie needed, mastered during extensive training in elbow, hand and wrist surgery at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York and a Hand and Upper Extremity fellowship at Harvard.

Surgery took six-and-a-half hours, and Debbie spent a total of five days in the hospital – all under the watchful eyes of her surgeon.

"My husband, Dave, couldn't believe how much time Dr. Kitay spent with us, answering all our questions," Debbie says. "I really felt cared for by her and the MedStar Montgomery staff."

Once home, Debbie required assistance with eating, bathing, typing on her iPad and more, for weeks. With both arms injured, she relied upon her husband, teenage daughter Brooke, many friends

and a home healthcare aide. She also started working with MedStar Montgomery occupational therapist Stephanie Daugherty – highly rated by Debbie and Dr. Kitay – on a regimen that continues to this day.

After two weeks, she was back in the classroom, assisted by her aide and a substitute teacher. By week six, she could drive again. Today, she can do almost everything she did before, including riding one of her beloved show horses for the first time a few weeks ago. Therapy, formerly twice per week, is now just once every three weeks supplemented by daily home exercises.

"Debbie's attitude and dedication to recovery helped get her where she is today," says Dr. Kitay. "The surgery was successful; she's done a great job with therapy. She now has great use of both arms and excellent, though not perfect, range of motion."

Ever motivated, Debbie is still working on her recovery and hopes to be able to stretch both arms out perfectly straight once again. Until then, she has a more urgent entry on her to-do list: Pad that hard, bare section of the barn floor. <<



Debbie is grateful to be riding again following surgery, performed by Alison Kitay, MD, to repair dislocations and fractures in both elbows.

To make an appointment with Alison Kitay, MD, or any of our orthopaedic surgeons, call **855-546-1826**.



MedStar Health
Center for Integrative Medicine

Treating the Whole Person Through Integrative Medicine

Our new center is designed to treat the whole person, taking into account not only physical symptoms, but also the emotional, psychological and spiritual impact a condition may have on an individual.

We combine approaches from traditional healing with modern conventional medical practices, including acupuncture, meditation, psychological interventions, nutritional counseling, and more to help you achieve optimal health.

Learn more at [MedStarMontgomery.org/Healthy](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/Healthy).

To schedule an appointment, call **855-546-0946**.

CONVENIENTLY LOCATED AT

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