



MedStar Montgomery
Medical Center

COMMUNITY
CLASS
SCHEDULE
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FOCUSED ON YOU

FALL 2018

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HEALTH NEWS AND INFORMATION FROM MEDSTAR MONTGOMERY MEDICAL CENTER

MedStarMontgomery.org

From the President



Dear Friends,

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and the team at MedStar Montgomery is taking this time to reflect on the strength of our patients and the dedication of our care providers. In this issue of *Focused on You*, we're shining a spotlight on women's health issues and several of our resilient patients.

Breast cancer is, of course, on the top of our minds this month. We are honored to share the story of a courageous mother and breast cancer patient, Dalila Campos. With the help of her family and Dawn Johnson Leonard, MD, site director of the MedStar Breast Health Program at MedStar Montgomery, Dalila is overcoming both the physical and emotional challenges of breast cancer.

"A breast cancer diagnosis is unexpected and comes with many questions—so our priority is treating the whole patient, well beyond the cancer," Dr. Leonard reflects on page 7. This sentiment sums up our commitment to comprehensive, compassionate care.

Whether we are helping patients plan for a healthy pregnancy (page 3), find pain relief (page 4), tackle heart disease (page 8), manage menopause symptoms (page 10), or make healthy lifestyle changes (page 11), our approach is the same: We work with our patients as individuals, never as faceless names on a chart.

If you have been putting off making an appointment or asking your doctor about a nagging medical worry, find inspiration in the patients featured on these pages. Your care team is here to help you thrive.

Want to support the life-saving work our clinicians do every day? Danielle DeVeau Crawford, CFRE, our new Vice President of Philanthropy, is energizing our community. There's a role for all of us. Read more on page 5.

Yours in good health,

THOMAS J. SENKER, FACHE

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

COMMUNITY CLASS SCHEDULE

EXERCISE CLASSES

Yoga, Beginner and Intermediate

\$60 for 6 weeks, dates vary

SENIOR CLASSES

Gentle Flow Yoga for Seniors

\$40 for 8 weeks, dates vary

Senior Exercise

FREE, Tuesdays and Wednesdays

Tai Chi

FREE, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays

Senior Strength & Balance

FREE, Wednesdays

Zumba Gold

FREE, Mondays and Wednesdays

DIABETES CLASSES

Diabetes Self-Management

\$40 for 2 weeks, dates vary

Pre-Diabetes

\$40 per 2-week session, dates vary

See *Diabetes Support Group* below.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

Home Alone

For ages 8 to 11, \$35, third Saturday of each 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

Mothers' Support Group

FREE, drop-in every Monday

Weight Management Support Group

FREE, first Tuesday of each month

PARENTING CLASSES (dates vary)

Complete Childbirth Preparation

\$150 for 6 weeks

Childbirth Express: \$75

Lamaze Technique: \$60

Breastfeeding Basics: \$30

Infant Care: \$30

See *Mothers' and Breastfeeding Support Groups* above.

OTHER CLASSES

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

Free Intro: Wednesday 1/15, 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

8-week course: Tuesdays, 1/29-3/19, 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Day-long retreat: Saturday 3/9, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Living Well: A workshop for people living with a chronic disease or condition

FREE, dates vary

For full descriptions and to learn more about dates and times, visit MedStarMontgomery.org/Calendar or call (301) 774-8882.

Three Tips for Planning a Healthy Future Pregnancy



Baby on the brain? Even if your plans are not in the immediate future, you can get started now on preparing for the healthiest possible future pregnancy.

Diana Sunday, MD, specializes in obstetrics and gynecology at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center. Below, she shares some of her top pregnancy planning tips. Male readers: tips 1 and 2 apply to you, too!

1. Considering a baby—someday? Let your doctor know now.

The earlier you start tackling health issues that may affect a future pregnancy, the healthier you'll be by the time you're ready to seriously consider a baby—and that's true for both men and women.

"Women sometimes feel silly mentioning their family plans to their doctor until they are seriously considering trying to get pregnant, and many men never speak to their doctor about their reproductive plans at all," says Dr. Sunday. "Don't hesitate to bring this up with your doctor sooner rather than later."



Meet Dr. Diana Sunday

Dr. Sunday specializes in obstetrics and gynecology at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center. Learn more about her approach to care at [MedStarMontgomery.org/MeetDrSunday](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/MeetDrSunday)

In the early stages of your conception planning, you and your doctor can discuss lifestyle and dietary changes to maximize your fertility. Your physician can also answer any questions you have on your mind. As your planning progresses, your doctor can help you consider treatment for any health conditions that may impact fertility or pregnancy, the role of your personal and family medical history, and the tests and screenings you may require.

2. Stay clear of Zika-affected areas.

Zika is a virus carried by mosquitos in certain areas of the world. It is linked to problems in pregnancy and birth defects in fetuses. Both men and women of reproductive age should take Zika into account when planning travel.

You should take precautions to avoid pregnancy for a period of time after returning from Zika-affected regions. Talk with your doctor about what areas of the world to avoid, if possible; precautions you can take to prevent pregnancy if travel to these regions is unavoidable; and symptoms of Zika to watch out for post-travel.

3. Vitamins are vital—even if you're not yet expecting.

"You may already know that it is important for pregnant women to supplement a healthy diet with a prenatal vitamin," says Dr. Sunday. "But it's actually a good idea for all women of reproductive age, even those who aren't expecting, to talk with their doctor about taking a prenatal vitamin."

Prenatal vitamins typically offer a higher dose of folic acid and iron than a typical adult multivitamin. Iron supports the baby's healthy growth, and folic acid reduces the risk of neural-tube defects. The best plan is to start a prenatal vitamin at least three months before you conceive.

"By taking prenatal vitamins and maintaining a healthy lifestyle before your positive pregnancy test, you can support your baby's development during those critical first months and beyond," says Dr. Sunday. ◀

To learn more about prenatal care at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, visit [MedStarMontgomery.org/Baby](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/Baby) or call (301) 570-7424 to make an appointment.

Ancient Approach Alive and Well at Center for Integrative Medicine


Every day at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, Darren Johnson, LAc, uses techniques from a 2,000-year-old discipline to help patients suffering from some very modern maladies.

From migraines to sports injuries to the side effects of cancer treatment, Darren's skill, compassion, and acupuncture techniques often work wonders where other treatments have failed.

That's certainly been the case for Catherine Rowe, whose personal battles with cancer left her miserable, in pain,

and on extended medical leave for most of the last two years, until she found herself in Darren's care.

Catherine's ordeal began in 2016, when her older sister died from colon cancer shortly after being diagnosed. With that experience as a cautionary tale, Catherine, then only 52, decided to have her first routine colonoscopy, a test she now urges everyone to get. Much to her dismay, test results came back positive, so she underwent a 10-hour surgery followed by heavy-duty chemotherapy. But a mere six months after completing treatment, Catherine's cancer returned with a vengeance, affecting both of her lungs. Specialists at an unrelated hospital removed part of Catherine's left lung in an attempt



Thanks to acupuncture therapy, Catherine Rowe is enjoying a better quality of life with her husband, Bill, and her dogs, Violet and Blossom.

Gratitude Matters

Introducing our New Vice President of Philanthropy

At MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, we are grateful for the many ways our community shows their support of our work—be it through time, treasure, or testimony. From our dedicated volunteers, to our generous philanthropic investors, to the patients who share their stories with others, we all have something to give.

No wonder we are so excited to introduce the newest member of our leadership team, Danielle DeVeau Crawford, CFRE, Vice President of Philanthropy at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center.

Ms. DeVeau Crawford will be working with our community to rally support for important initiatives throughout the hospital, from expanding and upgrading our hospital facilities to introducing new clinical services. Investments from our community and philanthropic partners are vitally important to our growth and success. ◀◀

Interested in learning how you can support our work? Visit [MedStarMontgomery.org/Philanthropy](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/Philanthropy) or call Ms. DeVeau Crawford at (301) 774-8804.



**Danielle DeVeau
Crawford, CFRE**

to stop the disease, but, in the process, inadvertently severed a major nerve.

With bad neuropathy in her hands and feet—a common reaction to chemotherapy—and searing pain on her damaged left side, Catherine couldn't return to her lifelong work as a school speech-language pathologist. Adding insult to injury, attempts to control her pain made her feel worse.

"My traditional pain medications were making me violently ill, clearly counterproductive to the healing process," she notes.

But luckily for her, a sympathetic case manager noticed that Catherine's insurance policy covered integrative medicine, including acupuncture. She suggested Catherine try it, relaying her own successful experience with the technique for fibromyalgia.

"I was skeptical," says Catherine, who has a Master of Science degree. "I was schooled in a science-based discipline and really had my doubts that acupuncture could or would work."

But at that point, she was willing and open to try anything and contacted MedStar Montgomery's Center for Integrative Medicine.



**Darren
Johnson, LAc**

"After my first acupuncture treatment with Darren, I walked to my car, slid in to my seat and moved around, like a normal person," she says. "And that's when it hit me: I'm not in pain!"

Catherine estimates that her first session reduced her pain by at least 75 percent; after her second, the pain had virtually evaporated. Now back on her feet and undergoing cancer treatment once more, she periodically returns to acupuncture for relief from new side effects.

"When my neuropathy was at its worst, I couldn't open a water bottle, count change, or bear to wear shoes," she says. "Today, I'm working part time, driving, and walking. Acupuncture helped me when nothing else did. I still can't believe it!"

Catherine's response doesn't surprise Darren, however, who has witnessed hundreds of other patients regain their health, mobility, and quality of life through the age-old approach. "At its most basic level," he says, "acupuncture just reminds the body how to heal itself." ◀◀

For more information about integrative medicine at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, visit [MedStarMontgomery.org/Acupuncture](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/Acupuncture) or call (301) 774-8673.



Dalila Campos is tackling breast cancer with the help of her supportive sons, fiancé, and MedStar Montgomery care team.

Finding New Strength

Breast Cancer Treatment Focuses on Physical and Emotional Health

The date of October 6, 2017 is burned into Dalila Campos' mind.

"I will never forget it," the now 43-year-old from Olney, Maryland says. "It was a Friday and I suddenly felt something in my left breast—a needle-like pain."

Her mammogram six months earlier was clear, so Dalila wasn't initially concerned. But when the pain returned the next day, she went straight to her doctor.

Her Ob/Gyn felt a possible cyst and referred her for an ultrasound. During that exam, the technician zeroed in on a specific spot. "I knew something was wrong and started crying before the doctor even came in and said there was a mass," Dalila recalls.

A biopsy revealed she has HER2-positive invasive ductal carcinoma, an aggressive form of breast cancer. She was referred to MedStar Montgomery Medical Center for surgery and treatment. "I was devastated, in shock, and so scared," Dalila says. "I called to tell all my family in Ecuador and everyone was so sad. They said, 'You are so young. How did this happen?'"

The answer? Hereditary factors. Doctors discovered this because MedStar Montgomery performs genetic tests on breast cancer patients using nationally recognized guidelines. Dalila tested positive for the BRCA gene, a mutation that causes an increased cancer risk. She opted for a full mastectomy and removal of her ovaries and began a full year of chemotherapy that caused her to lose her hair and left her emotionally depleted.

Dalila, a mother of two, felt scared that her cancer might cut her time with her family short. "It's been very hard," she bravely admits.

Her doctors have worked hard to help Dalila combat her fear and anxiety and say that is a vitally important part of all breast cancer treatment plans.

"A breast cancer diagnosis is unexpected and comes with many questions—so our priority is treating the whole patient, well beyond the cancer," explains Dawn Johnson Leonard, MD, site director of the MedStar

Breast Health Program at MedStar Montgomery. "Patients may be stressed about childcare, transportation, employment, finances, their health long-term, or even how to tell their families. We assess everyone's stress levels and causes; and have tools, resources, and people to help."

Dr. Leonard says her medical team believes that fully educating patients about their diagnoses and options helps too. "It's important for patients to know they have a sense of control and that they are a partner with us in their care," Dr. Leonard explains. "The best and most powerful tool we have is knowledge. That is how we make sure we are offering the right treatment in the right order to give the best chance of recovery."



Dawn Johnson Leonard, MD

Dalila says the team at MedStar Montgomery is definitely helping her work through her worry. "The care is the best I can imagine and the doctors have brought us so much calm."

She and her fiancé, Nico—who has stood by her side every step of the way and even shaved his head when she lost her hair—now understand her cancer is stage 1 and hasn't spread to her lymph nodes. Dalila will be closely monitored for other types of cancers for which the BRCA gene puts her at risk. Her sons will be, too, since they now know this increased cancer risk runs in the family.

"It is a true miracle I found this so I can fight it," Dalila says. "If I had waited until my next scheduled mammogram, this could have been more advanced or spread. Now I can focus on being a survivor. I tell my sons, 'I will be here for you for many, many years.'" ◀◀

For more information about breast health or to make an appointment, visit [MedStarMontgomery.org/Breast](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/Breast) or call (202) 295-0560.

Women and Heart Disease: Don't Ignore the Signs

During Breast Cancer Awareness Month, you may feel like you are seeing pink items everywhere you go. But for women, it's also important to see red.

Both breast cancer and heart disease are major health risks for women—in fact, the conditions can sometimes be interrelated (learn more about this overlap in the box on page 9). But while most women are aware of breast cancer risk, only about half of American women recognize heart disease for the threat it is, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That lack of awareness leads to increased rates of stroke and heart attacks. Even health care professionals sometimes miss the symptoms and severity of heart disease among women.

Take Martha Cammarata, RNC, BSN, for instance.

The retired psychiatric nurse spent 33 years caring for patients at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center. She has been diagnosed with atrial fibrillation and even has a pacemaker.

But despite Martha's professional—and personal—history, she wasn't ready to blame heart disease for the unusual pressure and pain she felt in her chest this past summer.

"I have a hiatal hernia and a history of acid reflux," the 77-year-old says today. "And I really, really wanted to believe that was all there was to it. So, I waited 12 hours before going to MedStar Montgomery's Emergency department."

That's often the case with women, says MedStar Montgomery cardiologist Estelle Jean, MD, who was on call when Martha arrived at the hospital.

"Be informed and your own best advocate."

— Martha Cammarata, cardiac patient

"Because our symptoms can be more subtle than men's, women often attribute the source of their discomfort to

gas or indigestion when the real culprit is the heart," Dr. Jean explains. "Plus, many women have spent a lifetime placing the care of husbands, kids, and others above caring for themselves, unintentionally jeopardizing their own health."

Luckily for Martha, the cardiologists at MedStar Montgomery are experts in diagnosing and managing heart disease. A close relationship with the MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute at MedStar Washington Hospital Center further assures the very highest quality of cardiovascular care all along the spectrum.



Estelle Jean, MD

Concerned by what she saw during Martha's initial exam, Dr. Jean admitted her for overnight observation. When a nuclear stress test came back with abnormal results, Martha soon found herself in MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute's advanced cardiac catheterization lab. There, interventional cardiologists discovered a severe blockage in her left coronary artery, an extremely dangerous situation. In fact, blockages like Martha's are routinely referred to as "widow makers" due to their tendency to cause massive heart attack and death.

Specialists quickly inserted a stent to prop open Martha's artery, restoring blood flow back to her heart and stabilizing her condition. Two days later, she was home.

"I have to admit I was shocked by the turn of events," Martha says. "I spent my entire career as a nurse, but at the time, I was in denial. I kept on thinking, 'This is not happening to me.' When you're personally in the throes of the situation, it can be overwhelming."

So, Martha now has this advice for others.

"Be aware of your own body and unusual changes," she says. "Be informed and your own best advocate. And lastly, when in doubt, check it out. There are no stupid questions when it comes to your health!" ◀◀

To learn more, visit MedStarMontgomery.org/Heart or call (301) 570-7404 to make an appointment. You can also follow Dr. Jean on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook as [DrEstelleJean](#).

Even after a long career in nursing, Martha Cammarata initially dismissed the symptoms of a coronary blockage. Today, she encourages all women to pay attention to the signs.



FOR BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS, HEART SCREENING IS SMART

“We all need to be mindful of our cardiac health, but women who have been treated for breast cancer should take special care to stay heart healthy,” says cardiologist Estelle Jean, MD.

Breast cancer and heart disease share several risk factors, including age, smoking, and excess weight. Recent research also suggests that some forms of breast cancer treatment, including certain types of radiation and chemotherapy, can increase the risks for heart disease.

Women who are being treated for breast cancer or have been treated for breast cancer in the past should talk

to their doctor about how to manage their cardiac risk factors. Diet and exercise can help prevent heart disease from developing, and regular cardiac screening can ensure that if heart disease does develop, it is detected when it is still early and most easily treatable.

“The relationship between some breast cancer therapies and heart disease should absolutely not scare women away from breast cancer treatment,” stresses Dr. Jean, “but it should increase their awareness of their cardiac health. Knowledge is power—knowing your risk means you can take steps to stay healthy.”

Managing Menopause: Is Hormone Therapy Right for You?



From hot flashes to insomnia, menopause and its unpredictable symptoms can be an unwelcome visitor.

Although it's sometimes ominously referred to as "The Change," it doesn't have to be scary.

"Some lucky women breeze through menopause no problem," says Ngozi Uzogara Wexler, MD, medical director of the Ob/Gyn department at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center. "But for many others, hormonal changes cause symptoms that may really affect quality of life."



**Ngozi
Wexler, MD**

During menopause, menstrual periods stop and the ovaries no longer produce estrogen. "The average age of menopause is 51, but this varies quite a bit," says Dr. Wexler. "Many women experience menopause-like symptoms for years leading up to full menopause, a period called perimenopause that often begins during your 30s or 40s."

As hormone levels change, some women experience symptoms beyond changing menstrual cycles. These can include hot flashes, sleep problems, night sweats, vaginal dryness, decreased libido, mood swings, and weakening bones. Hormone replacement therapy, or HRT, is one treatment option for reducing those symptoms and regaining a sense of control.

"HRT comes with both risks and benefits, so there's a lot of confusion about whether or not this treatment is recommended," says Dr. Wexler. "Long story short? Every woman is different."

HRT involves taking estrogen to supplement the body's diminishing natural supply. For women who are only suffering from vaginal dryness, estrogen may be taken in a "local" application as a vaginal ring, cream, or tablet. Women with other symptoms can take the hormone "systemically" in the form of a pill, cream, gel, patch, spray, or vaginal ring. Most women who have not had a hysterectomy also take a hormone called progesterin, which helps reduce the risk of uterine cancer.

For many women, HRT brings relief from pain and discomfort—both mental and physical. Plus, systemic HRT can help prevent hip and spine fractures, and combined estrogen and progesterin therapy can reduce the risk of colon cancer.

The downside? Research has shown that HRT can slightly increase the risk of heart disease in older women, breast cancer in women who take combined estrogen and progesterin therapy, stroke, and blood clots. The risks vary based on age, how long you've been in menopause, whether progesterin is administered along with estrogen, the hormone dose and delivery method, existing medical problems, and family history.

"There are so many effective ways to get you feeling better—just ask." – Dr. Wexler

HRT presents the lowest risks and highest benefits to women with severe symptoms brought on by early menopause or a hysterectomy (surgical menopause). Risks increase with age—but, depending on individual factors, may still be outweighed by the benefits. To reduce risks, your doctor will prescribe the lowest effective dose and see you for regular follow-up care.

For women for whom HRT is not the best option, there are many alternatives to consider. A class of antidepressant medication called SSRIs can often help with hot flashes and non-hormonal vaginal moisturizer can help treat dryness. Exercise and acupuncture can also reduce symptoms.

"If you're suffering with menopause symptoms, it's worth talking to your doctor about all your treatment options," says Dr. Wexler. "There are so many effective ways to get you feeling better—just ask." ◀◀

To learn more about women's health services at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, visit [MedStarMontgomery.org/HRT](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/HRT) or call **(301) 570-7424** to make an appointment.

Want to Quit Smoking? Your Doctor Can Help.

It's no secret: quitting smoking is *not* easy. For many smokers, the commitment to become smoke-free and stay that way can feel nearly impossible—but it's not.

For Syeda Moosvi, MD, an internal medicine physician at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center, helping her patients quit smoking is a passion—and a process that starts with a simple conversation.

Following clinical best practice guidelines, Dr. Moosvi asks all of her patients if they smoke. If the answer is “yes,” she asks follow-up questions like “How much?”; “Are you interested in quitting?”; and “Have you tried to quit in the past?”



**Syeda
Moosvi, MD**

“This is such an important conversation, because often it can be a starting point for support and ultimately for changing behavior,” she says. “Cigarette smoking is a very complex addiction. It's a disease, not just a habit.”

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), tobacco use is the most common preventable cause of death. Diseases progress faster in smokers.

Smoking can complicate surgery and other medical interventions, as well as delay recovery. Because smoking increases the risk of blood clots and stroke, women smokers over age 35 are not prescribed hormonal contraception or hormonal treatments for menopause-related symptoms (see page 10).

Fortunately, there are many options that can help smokers quit successfully. Nicotine patches, lozenges, gum, prescription medication, and smoking cessation counseling can all be part of a successful quit plan.

“The best combination for success is counseling with a smoking cessation expert and prescription medications,” says Dr. Moosvi. “Only 3 percent of smokers who attempt to quit without support will be successful.”

Dr. Moosvi reassures her patients that they can quit successfully. “Everyone quits at their own pace, and you don't have to do it alone. If you want to quit, talk to your doctor. We will always make time to talk about your goals and how we can help you achieve them.” ◀

To make an appointment or learn more, visit [MedstarMontgomery.org/HealthyLung](https://www.MedstarMontgomery.org/HealthyLung) or call (301) 774-6655.



BENEFITS OF QUITTING SMOKING:

- You'll reduce your risk of cancer, heart attack, and stroke.
- Your lungs will be better able to fight infection.
- Your taste buds will work better, so food will taste better.
- For women of childbearing age, quitting smoking reduces the risk of infertility, as well as having a low birth weight baby.
- By eliminating the cost of cigarettes and reducing your medical costs, you'll save money.

DR. MOOSVI'S TIPS:

- Create an internal dialog and rehearse your action plan for quitting. Ask yourself:
 - *What do I enjoy most about smoking?*
 - *Why do I want to quit?*
 - *What are the main challenges in my way?*
 - *Who most wants me to quit?*

WHEN YOU ARE READY:

- Set a “quit date” in the near future—not six months out.
- Be realistic and know what to expect, including the side effects of nicotine withdrawal (such as irritability, headaches, difficulty concentrating, and cravings).
- Avoid alcohol, which increases your chance of relapsing.
- Exercise—any physical activity is a good place to start.
- Distract yourself for two to three minutes until cravings pass.
- When you feel like smoking, talk to the person who most wants you to quit.

Just a few of the many talented female physicians working across MedStar Montgomery Medical Center



Back row, left to right:

Diana S. Sunday, MD, Obstetrics and Gynecology; Dawn Johnson Leonard, MD, Site Director of the MedStar Breast Health Program; Estelle Darlyse Jean, MD, Cardiology; Dr. Marilou G. Tablang-Jimenez, MD, Medical Director of the Addiction and Mental Health Center

Front row, left to right:

Syeda Batool Moosvi, MD, Internal Medicine; Elizabeth Castillo Marshall, MD, Plastics and Reconstructive Surgery; Maureen Passaro, MD, Internal Medicine; Ngozi Uzogara Wexler, MD, Medical Director of Obstetrics and Gynecology

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