

Latest Surgical and Hyperbaric Therapy Techniques Prevent Limb Amputation

BY LYNN CANTWELL

Fifty-seven-year-old Chester Hines of Arlington, Va., has had type 2 diabetes since he was 29. The disease forced the drafting and woodworking vocational teacher into early retirement, robbed him of his sight, caused his kidneys to fail and led to partial amputations on both of his feet. Still, Chester remained hopeful because experts at MedStar Georgetown's Center for Wound Healing helped him preserve something very important – his mobility.

It started in 2008 when Chester developed a sore on his left foot that would not heal. Surgeons at MedStar Georgetown amputated Chester's big toe to remove the infected tissue and stop the infection from spreading.

However, Chester's 25 years with diabetes had reduced his blood circulation, making it difficult for the surgical wound to heal. To control the infection, MedStar Georgetown

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▲ Chester Hines thanks Dr. Steinberg for saving his leg and preserving his mobility.



Gary Willis swims regularly to regain his full strength after successful stroke care at three MedStar hospitals.

Photo by Nicki Strickland

Three Stroke Care Teams, One Great Outcome

BY AMANDA BOWIE AND TRESSA MATTINGLY

For southern Maryland's Gary Willis, what was supposed to be a typical afternoon bike ride would lead him to three of MedStar Health's nine renowned hospitals.

Last summer, Gary was enjoying a bike ride when he felt a sudden, overwhelming heaviness in his arm. Unable to react, he collapsed on the side of the road. He was having a stroke.

Luckily for Gary, Nicole George, a nurse technician at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital, happened to pass by and immediately called the paramedics. Gary was rushed to nearby MedStar St. Mary's Hospital, a certified primary stroke center.

"When I arrived at St. Mary's, I underwent a full assessment that included a comprehensive exam that looked for brain damage," says Gary. With stroke care, time loss is brain loss.

So, it is important to get immediate stroke care to increase the likelihood of a full recovery and decrease the amount of damage to the brain. "When the neurologists saw that I had a hemorrhagic stroke, they knew I needed emergency treatment right away."

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Because You Asked: “What Can I Do To Manage My Parkinson’s Symptoms?”

BY LESLIE WHITLINGER

MEDICAL REVIEWERS: PHYSICAL THERAPIST LISA EBB, PT, MS, NCS, AND SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST KAREN EDICK, PT, MS

“Because You Asked” focuses on topics suggested by our readers. If you want to suggest a topic for future issues of this newsletter, please email them to torneyd@gunet.georgetown.edu.

Parkinson’s disease is a chronic, progressive neurodegenerative movement disorder. Characteristic primary symptoms of Parkinson’s include tremors, rigidity, slow movement (bradykinesia) and poor balance. Additionally, many people suffer with difficulty walking (referred to as “parkinsonian gait”) as well as reduced vocal loudness. But there is hope.

According to Johanna Murphy, PT, MS, director of MedStar Georgetown’s Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, “The key to living well with Parkinson’s is getting the right medical care and treatment. That regimen should include physical rehabilitation and speech therapy, which can help patients improve their quality of life.”

One such offering at MedStar Georgetown is the Lee Silverman Voice Treatment® (LSVT) BIG and LOUD program, which is designed to counter

the physical as well as vocal symptoms of Parkinson’s disease. A two-part program, it consists of intensive, hour-long, one-on-one sessions that occur four days a week for a month. As part of the regimen, patients perform at-home exercises daily.

Only specially certified therapists, such as those found at MedStar Georgetown, may offer the BIG and LOUD program.

BIG: Own Your Motion

“Parkinson’s disease affects the center of your brain which controls automatic movement,” says physical therapist Lisa Ebb, PT, MS, NCS, a board-certified neurologic clinical specialist. “That’s why so many people with the disease walk with short, shuffling steps and barely swing their arms.”

Through BIG, Lisa helps patients improve their ability to rise out of a chair, write more legibly and avoid falls

Should I try BIG and LOUD?

All physical and speech therapies require a referral by your doctor. With this referral, a MedStar Georgetown therapist will carefully assess you and determine the best treatment plan for you. MedStar Georgetown also offers a group exercise program and a communication support group, both of which are free and open to community members who have Parkinson’s disease.

by working on balance and walking techniques. It takes dedication, commitment and daily practice – such as repeatedly shifting your standing weight from right to left, front and back – to see results.

“You have to consciously think about what you’re going to do, and make forceful, purposeful movements,” Lisa says.

With intense and repetitive practice, many people can regularly achieve the movements they want. Patients who start therapy soon after diagnosis have the most success.

LOUD: Can You Hear Me Now?

LOUD can help the approximately 60 to 70 percent of Parkinson’s patients whose voices are hard to hear by increasing their overall speaking volume. Other benefits include improved speech clarity, swallowing and facial expressions, which can also be hampered by the disease.

“LOUD uses a series of specially designed exercises – in therapy and at home – to strengthen and tone the



Photo by Tressa Mattingly

▲ Lisa Ebb, PT, MS, NCS, works with Arthur (Harvey) Block, a Parkinson’s patient, to build his muscle strength and flexibility. These exercises improve balance and walking skills.



Photo by Tressa Matting

▲ Stanley Reines participates in speech exercises at a communications support group at MedStar Georgetown. By holding and repeating specific sounds, Stanley and other Parkinson’s patients can increase their speech volumes and clarity.

vocal cords, such as saying ‘ah’ for as long and loudly as you can,” says speech language pathologist and board-certified neurologic clinical specialist Karen Edick, PT, MS. “It also improves breath support, which is important for voice projection.”

By the end of the program, most people’s loudness increases by 10 percent or more. That’s enough, says Karen, to help many patients regain confidence in their ability to communicate.

“It’s very frustrating not to be able to make yourself heard and understood, especially by loved ones,” she says. “After LOUD, most people are happy

with the results and become much more sociable again.”

As a National Parkinson Foundation’s “Center of Excellence” – one of only 43 worldwide and the only one in the metropolitan area – MedStar Georgetown’s experienced and interdisciplinary team provides comprehensive and patient-centered care. That type of approach includes treatments that are tailored to each person’s unique needs and nearly always includes rehabilitation therapy.

To schedule an appointment or learn more about support groups, call **MedStar Georgetown M.D.** at **202-342-2400.** medstargeorgetown.org/parkinsons

First in D.C. to Earn “Baby-Friendly” Award

BY MEGGIE DAVIS

MedStar Georgetown joins an elite group of birth facilities by obtaining “Baby-Friendly” designation. In fact, we are the first and only hospital in the D.C. metropolitan area to earn this coveted award. Only 134 of 31,000 medical facilities in the U.S. have received this distinction.

This achievement is awarded by Baby-Friendly USA – the United States’ accrediting organization for the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, a global program sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). The initiative encourages and recognizes birthing facilities that provide an optimal level of care and best practices for breastfeeding mothers and their babies.

To earn this award, MedStar Georgetown successfully and consistently demonstrated the WHO/UNICEF “Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding,” from revamping policies to providing perinatal staff with intensive education.

“We are thrilled to have received this award from Baby-Friendly USA. It’s an incredibly valuable distinction,” says Carol Ryan, MSN, RN, IBCLC, FILCA, clinical manager, Perinatal Education and Lactation Services. “It boils down to public health – increasing the health of our women and our children. No matter how women choose to feed their babies, we give everyone 100 percent of our professional care.”

For information about the “Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding,” call **MedStar Georgetown M.D.** at **202-342-2400.** medstargeorgetown.org/breastfeeding

Common Questions Answered in Our Ask-a-Doc Online Library



Photo by Larry S. Glenn

▲ Gholam Motamedi, MD, director, clinical neurophysiology, answers questions about epilepsy and seizures.

Do you know the difference between a seizure and epilepsy? Want to learn about the benefits of being in a clinical trial?

If so, visit MedStar Georgetown’s Ask-a-Doc library. At this online library, you can watch videos of our doctors, who share information about various healthcare topics.

To view our Ask-a-Doc videos, visit medstargeorgetown.org/askadoc

Be Safe With Spring Cleaning

BY BRENDAN FURLONG, MD, CHIEF OF SERVICE, EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT, MEDSTAR GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

Spring is here, and as the days get longer, gardening, home maintenance and spring cleaning are on many weekend agendas. However, these activities don't come without their hazards. As an emergency room physician, my advice to you is simple: Proceed with caution.

In 2008, the Centers for Disease Control reported that 23 percent of emergency room visits were due to injuries and poisonings. Each spring, MedStar Georgetown's Emergency Department treats many such patients who get sick or injured while gardening, performing home maintenance and repairs or doing spring cleaning.

Many of the following tips people discard as "overly cautious." However, based on what I see in the Emergency Department, here are a few spring safety reminders that can help you avoid a trip to the hospital as you work in and around your home.



Chemical Safety

- Read and follow the safety information printed on pesticides, fertilizers, cleaning supplies and other chemicals.
- Wear protective gear, such as gloves, long sleeves and pants, eye protection and proper footwear when handling these products to prevent the chemical from harming the skin and eyes.
- Store products properly in appropriate containers and in a location that is not accessible to children.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleanup in the event of a chemical spill.
- Dispose of products when they are no longer needed or have expired, whichever comes first. Each municipality in this area has guidelines and locations for the safe disposal of such products.
- Do not mix chemicals. When combined, certain chemicals can form toxic gases, and in some cases, they can ignite.
- Do not use chemicals near an open flame. Although you shouldn't smoke at all, never, ever use lighted tobacco products when working with chemicals of any kind.

Equipment Safety

- Use modern equipment manufactured according to today's safety standards, such as lawn mowers, trimmers, gardening tools and ladders. Modern equipment has automatic shut-off mechanisms, safety locks and handles designed for safe and comfortable use.
- Be sure power equipment is turned off, unplugged and disabled before starting any maintenance, such as blade sharpening or tune ups.



Photo by Larry S. Glenn

▲ Brendan Furlong, MD, offers spring cleaning tips to help people avoid trips to the Emergency Department.

- Keep children indoors and supervised at all times when any outdoor power equipment is being used. Never let a child ride or operate a garden tractor or riding mower.
- Store all tools and equipment out of the reach of children.
- Wear protective gear. Long pants, sturdy shoes, long-sleeved shirts, ear and eye protection are all recommended to prevent hearing damage from power equipment and injuries from flying debris.
- Maintain a 3-point contact on a ladder (two hands and a foot, or two feet and a hand). Keep your body near the middle of the step and always face the ladder while climbing. Avoid using a metal ladder near power lines. Do not stand on the three top rungs of a straight, single or extension ladder.

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Latest Techniques Help Prevent Limb Amputation continued from page one

surgeons removed Chester’s toes on his left foot, preserving the rest of his foot and his overall mobility.

Then, last winter, poor circulation led to gangrene on the little toe of Chester’s right foot. Although he had angioplasty at another area hospital that successfully provided a new blood supply to the area, the wound would not heal, so he returned to MedStar Georgetown. “The doctors at Georgetown took such good care of me last time, there was no question where I was going,” says Chester.

It took several trips to the operating room to remove the infected area, which included all of his toes and about half of his foot. Then, it took three grafts to close the skin over what was left of his foot. “I have never seen a patient more motivated to avoid a limb amputation. Together, we prevailed,” says Dr. John Steinberg, DPM, podiatrist and diabetic limb salvaging expert.

MEDSTAR GEORGETOWN’S CENTER FOR WOUND HEALING AND HYPERBARIC MEDICINE HAS A 97 PERCENT SUCCESS RATE IN SAVING LIMBS FROM AMPUTATION.

“Dr. Steinberg asked me more than once if I was willing to keep fighting, to try to save my foot. He told me as long as I was, he would fight, too,” adds Chester. “I told him that as long as we still had options, I wanted to try them.”

“We used numerous advanced wound healing technologies to help Chester, including a negative pressure wound vacuum and hyperbaric oxygen,” says Dr. Steinberg. (See sidebar.) Now, Chester will be able to walk with no prosthesis and keep active. Not only is it a big deal to Chester that he have some level of independence, but his

Advanced Wound Treatment Options	Hyperbaric Oxygen	Wound Vacuum
What It Is	A chamber where a patient is surrounded by, and breathes, 100 percent pure oxygen at two to three times normal atmospheric pressure.	A plastic foam vacuum that creates negative atmospheric pressure around a wound.
Why It Is Used	Higher-pressure oxygen acts as a strong antibiotic, killing bacteria in a wound and improving healing.	The negative pressure draws infection out of the wound to promote faster healing.
How It Works	Higher-pressure oxygen stimulates the creation of new blood vessels in damaged and infected areas of the body.	The vacuum removes fluid, stimulates circulation of the blood and decreases bacteria and infection.
When It Is Used	About 15 percent of diabetic wounds are treatable with hyperbaric oxygen. Also, it can be useful when preparing tissue for skin grafts and other difficult-to-heal wounds.	Diabetic and other difficult-to-heal wounds benefit from a wound vacuum. Often this option is used along with hyperbaric oxygen treatment.
Treatment Considerations for Those With Difficult-to-heal Wounds	This treatment is not for everyone. Emphysema and other lung and airway conditions could make this option unsafe. A wound healing specialist will make the determination based on the type of wound and each patient’s treatment history.	This treatment is not for everyone. Open wounds that are too close to an organ, among other conditions, could make this option unsafe. A wound healing specialist will make the determination based on the type of wound and each patient’s treatment history.

ability to walk and be active will be a boost to his cardiovascular system, which can help him maintain his relative health.

Sadly, Chester’s experience is not typical. When people with diabetes go to the emergency room for an ulcer, statistics show that they have a 23 percent chance of their limbs being amputated.

As such, it is crucial that people who have complex medical issues that lead to non-healing wounds get treatment at a wound care program that offers the full range of specialists who can address the wound itself and its underlying causes. That’s what Chester received at MedStar Georgetown.

Whether caused by chemotherapy burns, open fractures, surgical incisions, bed sores or diabetic ulcers, the process of healing these wounds is complex and often requires many disciplines to achieve the best outcomes. At MedStar Georgetown, patients have access to a multidisciplinary team of experts that includes specialists in orthopaedics,

endocrinology, vascular surgery, infectious disease, rheumatology, neurology, dermatology, podiatry, hyperbaric medicine and physiatry.

“Our program is a truly multidisciplinary program that can address any cause of challenging wounds,” says Christopher Attinger, MD, chief, Division of Wound Healing and director of the program. With a team of experts under one roof, many patients can have multiple appointments with different specialists during the same visit.

“Dr. Steinberg was the man of the hour,” says Chester, an upbeat man who looks forward to receiving the special shoe that will get him back on his feet soon.

Chester’s advice to others is simple: Be patient, follow your doctor’s instructions, don’t give up, and go to MedStar Georgetown.

To make an appointment, call MedStar Georgetown M.D. at 202-342-2400. medstargeorgetown.org/wound

Three Stroke Care Teams, One Great Outcome continued from page one

MedStar St. Mary's offers ischemic stroke patients a clot-busting drug known as tPA or tissue plasminogen activator. However, because Gary was suffering from a hemorrhagic stroke, he needed to have a neurosurgeon on hand in case that level of surgical care was required. So, the doctors at MedStar St. Mary's quickly put Gary onto the MedSTAR Transport helicopter to MedStar Georgetown University Hospital – a Joint Commission designated primary stroke center with an emergency stroke team.

Stroke is the leading cause of disability in the United States. There are several factors that put people at risk of stroke including obesity, race, smoking or exposure to second hand smoke, physical inactivity or age. The risk may increase with certain medical conditions such as high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease.

How can you tell if someone is having a stroke? Think **FAST**.

Face

Ask them to smile. The inability to smile or a one-sided expression could indicate a stroke.

Arms

Ask them to raise both arms. Stroke symptoms can include one-sided muscle weakness or paralysis.

Speech

Ask them to say a simple sentence. Stroke symptoms may include confusion or slurred speech.

Time

CALL 911. Reduce the time for receiving medical attention. Delay may increase the possibility of permanent damage or death.

Access to Life-saving Treatment

Upon arrival at MedStar Georgetown, the stroke team, under the supervision of Dr. Dennis Landis, provided immediate medical intervention to manage the bleeding in Gary's brain and prevent further complications and damage. Fortunately, Gary did not require neurosurgery to treat the stroke.

For the next nine days, Gary was cared for by his revered medical team of MedStar Georgetown stroke experts. "I can't say enough about my team of doctors at Georgetown," says Gary. "The care I received was similar to a five-star hotel, people came to check on me constantly; and each time, they were so kind and made sure I was receiving the best care I could."

Because of MedStar Georgetown's research partnership with Georgetown University Medical Center (GUMC), Gary had access to a unique clinical drug trial supervised by Dr. Chelsea Kidwell, director of both the university's stroke center and MedStar Georgetown's Comprehensive Stroke Program.

The study, available only through MedStar Georgetown and GUMC, evaluates Albumin to see if it can help reduce swelling in the brain after a stroke. While Albumin's effectiveness is still being studied, Gary believes having access to this drug saved his life.

"Patients like Gary are vital to our clinical trials," says neurologist Mason Markowski, MD, one of Gary's stroke physicians. "We are running a study that will help us learn about how we can save more lives in the future. With enough time and the right medicine based on the patient's type of stroke, we can intervene and salvage as much of the brain as possible."

The Road to Recovery

Rehabilitation is a vitally important component of stroke care. In fact, many stroke survivors regain lost function and independence with the help of rehabilitation specialists. Gary found such care at the MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital (MedStar NRH), which has been ranked by physicians for 17 consecutive years as one of America's best hospitals in *U.S. News & World Report*. Also, MedStar NRH has one of the largest stroke programs in the country.

THANKS TO THE SPECIALIZED STROKE SERVICES HE'S RECEIVED, GARY IS BACK TO LEADING A FULL LIFE.

"I had heard nothing but good things about MedStar NRH, and knew I would be well taken care of, just like I had been at MedStar St. Mary's and MedStar Georgetown," Gary says. When he left MedStar Georgetown, Gary could barely raise his thumb. After an intensive 14-day stay at MedStar NRH, he was able to leave with the help of a walker, a tremendous feat made possible thanks to advanced rehabilitation services.

"We help people have the quickest possible recovery from their stroke, while keeping them medically stable, and teaching them how to avoid having another stroke," says Dr. Brendan Conroy, medical director of the Stroke Recovery Program at MedStar NRH. "We also teach our patients how to avoid 'bad habits' during their recovery, and we work with their family and friends on how to help stroke survivors during the recovery period."

Gary also credits his wife, Robin, who was there for him every step of the way. "Having my wife be my advocate is




Silver Plus Performance Achievement
 Awarded to MedStar Georgetown
 University Hospital
 October 2011 - 2012

This award recognizes MedStar Georgetown's commitment and success in implementing a higher standard of stroke care by ensuring that stroke patients receive treatment according to nationally accepted standards and recommendations.

what helped me get through some of the toughest times," says Gary. "Not only having the best team of doctors, but also my wife, made all the difference in my recovery."

Going Home

When Gary returned to his home in St. Ingoes, Md., MedStar St. Mary's arranged for him to have two weeks of in-home therapy. During the following six weeks, Gary participated in outpatient therapy at MedStar St. Mary's Rehabilitation Medicine program including occupational and speech therapy services.

Today, Gary rides a stationary bike, swims, uses light weights and practices some occasional yoga. "I've returned to my job, and I commute to Washington, D.C., where I work for the U.S. government," he says. Thanks to the specialized stroke services he's received, Gary is back to leading a full life.

The Power of a Hospital System

Gary credits the MedStar Health system for helping him return to his normal life.

"Staying within the system made it easier for me as a patient. I didn't have to deal with a lot of the issues other patients may have to deal with when being transferred," he says.

Dr. Conroy explains. "We share documents throughout the MedStar system so that I could review everything that the MedStar St. Mary's and MedStar Georgetown physicians did for Gary, as well as which medicines were provided and which medicines may have caused him problems."

Gary is on the road to a full recovery. "I plan to keep working at it. Having a second chance keeps me going," he says. "Luckily for me, I'm in good hands with MedStar Health."

For a free stroke kit or to make an appointment, call **MedStar Georgetown M.D.** at **202-342-2400.**
medstargeorgetown.org/stroke

Be Safe With Spring Cleaning continued from page four

Care for Your Body

- Use proper lifting techniques. Use your legs with a straight back to lift heavy objects and avoid lifting while twisting. When you get tired, rest.
- Start slowly. It is better to build up a tolerance to activity, particularly if you have been inactive during the winter.
- Beat the heat. On unexpectedly hot days, stay hydrated by drinking at least 8 ounces of water and/or electrolyte-rich drinks like Gatorade® each hour while you are working. Avoid working outside during midday when it is hottest.
- Use sunscreen. Even on cool or cloudy spring days, we *all* need sunscreen. Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 15, and reapply every two hours.

- Don't be afraid to ask for help. Whether it is to lift or move something heavy, clean your gutters or tune up your lawn mower, it is important to know when the job is best suited for a professional or simply requires more hands.

For More Information

To learn more about safety around the house, visit the following websites:

- medstargeorgetown.org/poisonfirstaid
- medstargeorgetown.org/chemicalreactions
- medstargeorgetown.org/pesticides
- medstargeorgetown.org/sunburn

Long sleeves, hats and sunscreen are all important when working outdoors. ▶



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