



# MedStar Georgetown MD

## New hope for those living with lymphedema.

By Susan Lahout

Leslie Jennings enjoyed a busy, active life raising two children and traveling the world with her husband, Dan, who had a career in the military. As Leslie approached middle age, she was keen to live her best life through exercise and diet. In 1988, she and her family were stationed in Daegu, South Korea, when she had a mole removed that appeared to be a superficial melanoma.

Eight years later, after returning to Savannah, Georgia, for their next assignment, Leslie was diagnosed with stage 3 melanoma. A large golf ball-sized lump had appeared in her right lower groin. A military physician

successfully removed the mass and explained to Leslie there would be some significant side effects. Because her surgeon needed to remove some cancerous lymph nodes in the area, Leslie now had lymphedema, a common condition caused by a blockage in the lymphatic system. The main symptom is painful swelling in the affected leg, accompanied by an increased risk of skin infections and sepsis.

Every day, Leslie wore heavy compression bandages to encourage the lymph fluid to flow back toward the trunk of her body. Leslie endured

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**Myra Brown is loving life after the successful removal of a pancreatic tumor.**

Photo by C.King Media

## Thriving after pancreatic surgery thanks to expert care and support.

By Karen Hansen

After having a mass removed from her pancreas, Myra Brown, 37, was left with a small L-shaped scar on her abdomen. Her surgeon, Emily Winslow, MD, regional chief of Hepatopancreaticobiliary Surgery at MedStar Health, mentioned that Myra could have the scar revised. "Oh, no," was Myra's surprising reply. "To me, this scar looks wonderful. This scar stands for 'Life.' It stands for 'Love.' I'm keeping it. Always."

How Myra earned that scar is a point of pride for this vivacious, 37-year-old working mother from Washington, D.C. The cystic mass

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**After undergoing lymph node surgery, Leslie Jennings' lymphedema is under control. The painful swelling in her leg is gone, and she is again enjoying being active.**

Photo by Robin Wallace

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5 Distinguished philanthropist endows chair and donates to new Medical/Surgical Pavilion.



# A mother donates part of her liver to save her baby's life.

By Susan Walker

Ever since Kasin Kelly was born, his mother, Alexis Wilson, had felt that something just wasn't right. Diagnosed with jaundice at birth, he was a healthy, happy baby in general, but the yellowing in the whites of his eyes never cleared up. In fact, by the time he was eight months old, the yellow was more intense. Alexis mentioned her concerns about this at every visit with Kasin's community-health pediatrician, but the doctor said it wasn't uncommon in breastfed infants.

Around the same time, Alexis noticed changes in Kasin's eating, bowel movements, and activity level that raised alarms. Alexis took him to a different pediatrician, who was deeply concerned and immediately referred her to another hospital. Kasin underwent a series of tests. A few hours later, Alexis got the news that changed both their lives.

**"The team at MedStar Georgetown was awesome. They love Kasin and we truly love them! Without them, I could have lost my son."**

— Alexis Wilson

"The tests showed that he had biliary atresia and was in liver failure," she says. "I was in complete shock and heartbroken. Then the doctor told me Kasin's liver failure was very advanced, and he needed a liver transplant. My first thought was, 'What do I need to do to be his donor?'"

Biliary atresia is a rare condition that develops before birth. It causes a blockage in the tubes that carry bile from the liver to the intestines. The blockage can cause serious damage to the liver and, if left untreated, can lead to cirrhosis and death.

Alexis and Kasin were referred to MedStar Georgetown University Hospital and began the evaluation



**After almost dying from liver failure, Kasin Kelly is now a healthy, happy little boy thanks to a liver transplant from a living donor—his mom.** Photo by C King Media

process for a living donor liver transplant for Kasin.

"A living donor transplant is one of the best ways for a patient to quickly get the transplant they need. That's true not only for pediatric patients but also for adult patients, especially if the reason for the transplant is to treat liver cancer," explains Juan Francisco Guerra, MD, director of the Living Liver Donor Transplant program with the MedStar Georgetown Transplant

Institute and one of the surgeons who performed Alexis' donor surgery. "Living donor transplants also improve long-term outcomes and shorten the recovery period for the recipient, in part because these organs tend to be of higher quality and there is less wait time for an organ to become available."

Alexis donated 27% of her liver to her son, staying in the hospital for three days after her surgery. Over time, the donated liver portion will grow to full size in Kasin, and Alexis' liver will regrow to its original size. Today, thanks to his mother's donation, Kasin is a healthy, active 2-year-old and the light of his mother's life. And Alexis has recovered well from her donation surgery.

"Each day, when I look at my son, I'm so grateful that I was able to be his donor," Alexis says. "My decision to be a living donor is something I'll never regret. I felt safe during the entire process. The team at MedStar Georgetown was awesome. They love Kasin, and we truly love them! Without them, I could have lost my son. I'm very thankful for everyone on the team and the care they provided for us."



**Alexis Wilson is grateful she was able to be a liver donor for her son. And, she is grateful for our MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute team that made her feel safe during the entire process.** Photo by C King Media

Visit [MedStarHealth.org/LiverDonor](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/LiverDonor) to learn more. To request an appointment with the living liver donor team, call **202-444-1360**.

# The good news about joint health and exercise!

By Kerri Layman, MD, Chief of Service, Emergency Department, MedStar Georgetown University Hospital

With spring in full bloom, many of us who have been cooped up due to weather or COVID-19 are ready to get outside and get active. This might mean joining a sports team, dusting off the running shoes, tuning up the bicycle, or hitting the pickleball, tennis, or basketball court with friends.

Multiple studies confirm exercise offers abundant physical and mental benefits. In addition to producing a sense of wellbeing, regular exercise can reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke, as well as help protect against diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer, depression, and insomnia. But did you know exercise is also good for your joints? That's right, being active helps keep your joints healthy by:

- **Strengthening muscles.** Strong muscles stabilize and take the pressure off a joint, making it less likely to suffer traumatic injury and less likely to be damaged by wear and tear.
- **Providing lubrication.** Your joints are surrounded by lubricating synovial fluid. During exercise, this synovial fluid gets pumped through the joint, helping to pad the cartilage and reduce friction against it.
- **Increasing blood flow.** Exercise gets the heart pumping, which increases blood circulation throughout the body, flushing nourishing oxygen and nutrients into the synovial membrane. This membrane is a layer of connective tissue that lines the cavities of joints, tendon sheaths, and bursae.
- **Removing cellular waste.** Exercise encourages the breakdown of damaged cells and the removal of spent nutrients, making room for new nutrients and healthy new cells. It's like taking out the trash.

## Follow these tips to help keep your body and joints healthy.

### Warm up and cool down.

Before you start exercising, prepare your body by warming up with gentle movements. Warm up your spine by doing side bends and gentle twists. Slowly bend forward until you feel a stretch and then roll back up, vertebra by vertebra.

Limber up your limbs with shoulder shrugs, arm circles, and overhead stretches. Gently stretch your hamstrings and calves. Rotate your wrists and ankles. Repeat these stretches several times. Following your full workout, do some gentle stretching. If you are new to exercising, consult a physical trainer on the right warmup and workout exercises for you.

### Wear supportive shoes.

Not all feet are the same! Different shapes, arches, and toe lengths require different types of shoes. Different activities require different support, so wear shoes designed for your activity to keep your feet healthy and safe from injury. Make sure you have the cushioning and stability you need. Our sports physicians recommend visiting an athletic-shoe store with knowledgeable personnel who can help fit you with the correct footwear to prevent injury.

### Pace yourself—start out slow and build up your intensity.

Your body will need time to get used to being active. Too much, too soon can cause injury. Ease into the amount of time and intensity you put into your exercise. Listen to your body; if you feel any pain, slow down or stop.

### Variety is the spice of life and the key to avoiding injuries.

Doing a range of different exercises will keep you from getting bored, keep your body in good shape without overemphasizing particular muscle groups, and lower your risk of injury. Ideally, you will want a balance between strength training, cardiovascular training, and stretching and range-of-motion exercises. A coach can give you recommendations in each exercise area.

### If you're a little stiff or sore after a workout, that's normal.

If you're experiencing muscle soreness after your workout, you can apply ice to the affected area to reduce pain and inflammation. The soreness should diminish as your body gets stronger and becomes more accustomed to being active.

Joint pain is rarely an emergency. Most cases of mild joint pain can be successfully managed at home. However, you will want to contact your doctor if you have sudden swelling, intense pain, redness, or tenderness and warmth around the joint.



Kerri Layman, MD



Before you start exercising, warm up with gentle movements and stretches.



## Quality of life soars after hip replacement. By Leslie A. Whitlinger

Jayne Withers was never a fan of surgery, always preferring a more natural approach to health and healing. But when she was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2016, she knew she had no other option. She underwent a lumpectomy, hoping that her first experience with surgery would also be her last. Her hip, however, had other plans.

In 2019, Jayne began noticing some discomfort in her left leg. Citing her “high tolerance for pain,” the lifelong runner nevertheless continued the physical activities that she loved.

Until 2021, that is.

“Over time, my pain got progressively worse,” says the Washington, D.C., resident. “When I realized I could no longer do something as simple as putting on my socks or shoes without hurting, I knew I couldn’t put off getting help any longer.”

Jayne went to her internist, Varun Sharma, MD, at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital for advice. As she feared, he immediately referred her to the hospital’s highly regarded orthopaedics department for further evaluation. Jayne reluctantly made an appointment, dreading the results.

However, after talking to Kevin Park, MD, an orthopaedic surgeon specializing in hip and knee replacements at MedStar Georgetown, her worst fears were put to rest.

“Dr. Park was so reassuring and kind,” Jayne says. “I was immediately impressed by his obvious knowledge. But even after he told me I had no cushioning left between my bones, I was still really hesitant about having hip replacement. And, he didn’t try to talk me into anything, which I really appreciated. I hate being pressured!”

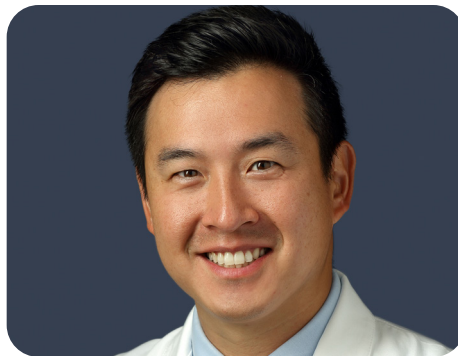
Instead, Dr. Park listened to Jayne’s concerns, and explained what non-surgical options were available to her and what she could reasonably expect from each option. He then



**Jayne Withers was nervous about having hip replacement surgery, but several months after her surgery, she is pain-free and feeling fantastic.** Photo by Hilary Schwab

suggested that Jayne take her time to think about what she wanted to do and get back to him when she was ready.

Armed with her choices, Jayne decided to try physical therapy first. But, her pain continued to get worse. Three months later, she called Dr. Park back and said she was ready for surgery.



**Kevin Park, MD**

“Conservative approaches like anti-inflammatories, injections, and physical therapy can help relieve symptoms and, possibly, postpone further deterioration,” Dr. Park says. “But once the cartilage is gone, you can’t get it back. Replacement is the only way to get to the root of the problem and fix it.”

In November 2021, Dr. Park operated on Jayne using a newer, muscle-

sparing procedure called the direct superior approach. The procedure approaches the hip from a higher (superior) angle than the other two more commonly performed surgeries. It is a minimally invasive procedure that preserves the IT band—a thick band of tissue that supports both hip function and stability—thereby allowing for faster recovery.

While still in the recovery room, Jayne was soon up and walking. After an overnight stay at MedStar Georgetown, she returned home and started physical therapy to regain strength and motion in her leg.

Three months later, Jayne was pain-free and walking without any aids. She has become a proponent of Dr. Park and the surgery she had tried so hard to avoid.

“To anyone who has bad hip pain and is worried about surgery, I’d say, ‘Just do it,’” says a grateful Jayne. “My quality of life is so much better than it was before the surgery. Thanks to Dr. Park and MedStar Georgetown, I feel fantastic!”

So does Dr. Park. “I just love getting people back to their active lives and feeling good once again.”

Visit [MedStarHealth.org/Hip](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Hip) to learn more. To request an appointment with one of our specialists, call **202-444-8766**.

## Distinguished philanthropist endows chair and donates to new Medical/Surgical Pavilion. By Jenne Young

Four years ago, Daniel D’Aniello underwent spine surgery with Jay Khanna, MD, a spine surgeon and physician executive director of MedStar Orthopaedic Institute and chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at the Georgetown University School of Medicine. Over the months and years following the surgery, the two men developed a relationship of mutual respect and found they shared an interest in the advancement of orthopaedic and spine care and research.

Mr. D’Aniello, co-founder and chairman emeritus of the board of the Carlyle Group, a global investment firm, saw how health care could be transformed through an increased focus on clinical excellence, field-changing research, and education of the next generation of orthopaedic surgeons. His faith in Dr. Khanna’s visionary leadership and clinical expertise inspired his \$5 million gift to Georgetown University Medical Center and MedStar Georgetown University Hospital.

Mr. D’Aniello’s generous gift includes \$3 million to establish The D’Aniello Family Endowed Chair of Orthopaedic Surgery at Georgetown University School of Medicine and \$2 million to support clinical care in the new Medical/Surgical Pavilion, currently under construction. This world-class facility will transform the way personalized care is delivered to meet the needs of families across the region and beyond. Specializing in transplantation, orthopaedic surgery, spine surgery, neurosciences, and surgical services, the pavilion will feature 156 private patient rooms, a rooftop helipad with direct access to 31 state-of-the-art operating rooms, and a modernized emergency department with 32 private rooms.

“Philanthropic investments like Mr. D’Aniello’s accelerate the advancement of medicine, inspire



**Mr. Daniel D’Aniello, with Dr. Jay Khanna, expressed his commitment to improving patient care with his gift supporting the Medical/Surgical Pavilion and the advancement of orthopaedic excellence.**

Photo by Gary Landsman

our caregivers, and help ensure a future of promise and hope for our patients and their families,” says Mike Sachtleben, senior vice president and chief operating officer, Washington Region, MedStar Health, and president, MedStar Georgetown University Hospital.

“I have so much confidence in Dr. Khanna’s leadership and expertise—we are certain he will advance orthopaedic and spine research to find even better clinical approaches to care for patients. This is the main reason we are so proud to be philanthropic partners for the Medical/Surgical Pavilion and Endowed Chair of Orthopaedic Surgery at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital and Medical Center,” says Mr. D’Aniello.

“MedStar Georgetown was founded as, and remains, a Catholic and Jesuit institute,” says Dr. Khanna. “And out of that tradition comes our commitment to *cura personalis*, or care for the whole person. I am humbled that Mr. D’Aniello would put

his support behind the University, our department, our Institute, MedStar Health, and me. We all are looking forward to making him and his family proud of their investment and vote of confidence in us.

“The endowed chair will play a critical role in supporting continued excellence in orthopaedic surgery, spine surgery, and musculoskeletal health programs by expanding research and teaching resources for clinicians, residents, fellows, and medical students,” says Dr. Khanna.

Kenneth A. Samet, President and CEO of MedStar Health, says, “I am so grateful to Mr. D’Aniello for his very generous support of the Medical/Surgical Pavilion and of Dr. Khanna and our efforts to continue building out our world-class clinical research orthopaedic surgery platform across the nation’s capital region. All of us were deeply touched when we learned of his support to create The D’Aniello Family Endowed Chair of Orthopaedic Surgery at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital and Georgetown University Medical Center. With Dr. Khanna’s leadership, Mr. D’Aniello’s generosity will allow us to continue to teach the brightest minds for the future, and to find even better clinical approaches to care for our patients in need.”

“With this extraordinary gift, we are able to advance the research mission of the University and contribute important insights to medical care,” adds Georgetown University President John J. DeGioia. “We are profoundly grateful for the D’Aniello family’s generous support of our community.”

Through the generous support of people like Mr. D’Aniello, the community will benefit from an endowed chair of orthopaedic surgery and a world-class facility, enjoying an improved quality of health care for generations to come.

To learn more about how your support can make a significant impact, please visit [MedStarHealth.org/Support](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Support) or call **202-444-0721**.



on her pancreas had actually been detected 11 years ago, when a case of appendicitis brought her to the hospital. During her appendectomy, a small cyst was found on her pancreas. "At the time, I was overwhelmed with being a new mother. The cyst didn't bother me. It was 'out of sight, out of mind.' I forgot about it."

Fast-forward to November 2020, when Myra went to the emergency department because of pain in her right side. The ER doctor noticed the mass and urged Myra to see a surgeon. Her extensive research led her to Dr. Winslow. "I researched the type of patients she treated, the type of care she delivered, the number of years in her specialty, and the online patient reviews. Everything looked good and I made an appointment."

When Myra met Dr. Winslow at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, she immediately felt comfortable. "She was honest and compassionate," says Myra. After Dr. Winslow reviewed Myra's case with a multidisciplinary tumor board, she told Myra that even if the mass turned out not to be cancerous, surgery was still the best option—specifically, a distal pancreatectomy and splenectomy.

**"MedStar Health has a great team of medical professionals. I would not dare go anywhere else."**

—Myra Brown

Myra agreed, but was still apprehensive. Dr. Winslow arranged a follow-up call and encouraged Myra to invite her two aunts and her sister. As Dr. Winslow explained the procedure, Myra felt that she "was in good hands." Still, "I was scared," she admits.

On the day of surgery, as Myra entered the operating room, she says, "I heard the stereo playing Beyoncé's 'All the



**Myra Brown looks forward to getting back to activities she loves following pancreatic surgery. She values the compassionate care she received from Dr. Emily Winslow.**

Photo by C.King Media

Single Ladies,'" one of Myra's favorite songs. "One of the nurses told me, 'We did that for you, to help calm you.' That made me smile, and then I was out!"

"Patients benefit not only from our caring staff with years of experience, but also from our multidisciplinary team approach," explains Dr. Winslow. "A successful surgical experience requires the whole clinical team to work together towards the best outcome. This includes the nurses in the operating room and on the floor, the diagnostic and interventional radiologists, advanced gastroenterologists, advanced practice clinicians, and so many others."

Upon recovery, Dr. Winslow told Myra her tumor was a rare low-grade cancer of the pancreas. Myra would need annual monitoring for five years, though the likelihood of it returning was slim. Myra is proud and unafraid after traveling this far. "MedStar Health has a great team of medical professionals. I would not dare go anywhere else. And Dr. Winslow? That lady knows her stuff."

Myra has advice for anyone traveling a similar path: "Listen to your body. Do the research. And build a relationship with your doctor where you will feel comfortable." Myra continues, "Look at me, I'm smiling. I'm loving life." And she has an L-shaped good-luck charm to remind her.



**Meet Emily Winslow, MD**  
Visit [MedStarHealth.org/Winslow](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Winslow) to watch Dr. Winslow discuss pancreatic surgery.



Visit [MedStarHealth.org/Panc](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Panc) to learn more or to request an appointment with one of our specialists call **202-444-1062**.



# New hope for those living with lymphedema.

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**After having cancer, Leslie Jennings suffered for years with lymphedema, which caused painful swelling in her leg. Since Dr. Song performed her lymph node surgery, Leslie has returned to exercising and training for a 5K—pain-free.** Photo by Robin Wallace

this difficult condition, drastically restricting her physical activity and often keeping her leg elevated to prevent further swelling.

**For the first time in 26 years, Leslie's leg appeared normal.**

After many years, Leslie decided she needed to regain control of her life and started researching treatments that could help with her symptoms of lymphedema. A friend suggested Leslie meet with David Song, MD, physician executive director for MedStar Health Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital.

Dr. Song is a pioneer in performing lymph node surgery. "One of the

biggest side effects of cancer surgery is lymphedema. Lymph nodes act as little pumps to remove lymph fluid, and when malignant nodes are removed, the area can swell intolerably," Dr. Song explains. "Although there is no cure for lymphedema, one surgical option is to transplant excess lymph nodes from another part of the body to the area where the cancerous nodes were removed and connect them so that they can drain lymph into an existing blood supply," he says.

Leslie felt very comfortable with Dr. Song as he explained the surgery and patiently answered her questions. Dr. Song believes in individualized patient care and treats each patient as if they were members of his own family. Although not everyone is a good candidate for surgery, further testing revealed Leslie was eligible for treatment.

Dr. Song emphasizes that to achieve an optimal outcome, "the patient and the clinical staff must work as a team. It is essential that the patient participates and diligently performs the post-operative care including a period of bed rest, limb elevation, and continued compression." On the day of surgery, Dr. Song transferred lymph nodes from Leslie's back to her groin by operating with surgical microscopes. He was successful in opening lymphatic channels and reestablishing a blood supply to the lymph nodes.

Leslie was determined to do her part by following all of Dr. Song's post-operative instructions for a full six weeks. Six months later, she started to notice real changes, including significantly reduced swelling in her leg. For the first time in 26 years, Leslie's leg appeared normal.

Now, Leslie is back to exercising at the gym five days per week and is training to run a 5K race. The surgery provided her with improved mobility, and she is very grateful for her enhanced quality of life. "The entire team at MedStar Georgetown was so impressive. I can't say enough good things!"



**Meet David Song, MD**  
Visit [MedStarHealth.org/Song](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Song)  
to watch Dr. Song  
discuss lymphedema.



Visit [MedStarHealth.org/LymphedemaHelp](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/LymphedemaHelp) to learn more or call **202-444-8752** to schedule an appointment with one of our specialists.



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## Excellence validated: blood disorders and cancer services accredited, again.



Once again, the MedStar Georgetown University Hospital Stem Cell Transplant and Cellular Immunotherapy program has received validation of excellence in cellular therapy by the Foundation for the Accreditation of Cellular Therapy (FACT) through their rigorous accreditation process.

Also re-accredited are the Blood and Marrow Collection program and Cell Therapy Manufacturing Facility. This achievement is a testament to the expertise and dedication of our experienced team. FACT is the only international standard used in the United States, Canada, and several other countries.

With the largest blood and marrow collection site in the country, MedStar Georgetown is also the Washington, D.C., area's only adult, FACT-accredited program for allogeneic and autologous transplantation and cellular immunotherapy. We are providing our community with access to life-saving care that has met the highest standards for the entire cellular therapy process, from collection and processing to storage and, eventually, administration to patients.

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