

# Dr. Day: A Long Passionate Journey for One

By Dick Myers  
Staff Writer

It's a day to show love for your doctor(s). March 31 is celebrated as Doctor's Day and in St. Mary's County doctors come in a shapes and sizes. They are general practitioners (family doctors) or they can practice in highly specialized areas. The county has been fortunate in recent years to attract many of those specialists.

One of them is Dr. Moutasem Aljundi, an interventional radiologist at MedStar St. Mary's Hospital.

He does procedures such as:

- Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)
- Enlarged Prostate
- Pelvic Congestion Syndrome
- Pulmonary Embolism

Dr. Aljundi said, "We use different material like titanium coils and sclerotic material to lower risk. The treatment generally would require either no stay at the hospital or minimal stay. Maybe one night or maximum two. Patients would be going back to their normal activity within few days after the procedure. And the risks of the procedure are less than other lines of services."

He added, "We have a women's health service where we do a procedure called embolization. We use similar techniques to what we do for the prostate, but that's guided at the uterus fibroids. For women who have fibroids, we basically block the blood supply to the fibroids and let them shrink it from the inside, (eliminating) the need to go in and remove the part of the uterus or the whole

uterus to fix the problem."

He explained, "This is a procedure where you get it done, leave that day."

He noted, "We do treat life-threatening (in) the emergency department."

He said they treat what is called deep vein thrombosis, "which happens for various reasons where one the veins clots, breaks up, normally it would move through the bloodstream. And in the presiding lung, that is a life-threatening condition because it blocks the blood supply from the lung. We go in the neck or the groin, and we guide a catheter device through the heart. We basically do a manual for the clot. We get the clot out, then we filter the clot from the blood to return the blood to the patient. And this way we open up that part of the lungs."

He observed, "A lot of times for patients, we do a lot of procedures."

Dr. Aljundi came to the United States from Aman, Jordan originally. "In my medical school I decided to pursue training in surgery. So, I started surgical training in Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore."

In Jordan "normally you get into medical school straight away and in Jordan after high school. So, there is no college degree, so the medical school is a little bit different. The system is kind of a British system as compared to the American systems. So, the American system for medical school you have to obtain a bachelor's degree, and a college degree of four years. And then you apply to medical school. The British or English system is you basically apply to medical school straight away, when I was 18 years old. I graduated

when I was 24, 25 years old. You have to get your equivalent license for the United States medical system. It's called ME, it's kind of pre that you apply for that you're eligible to practice medicine in the United States."

At Johns Hopkins, he said, "I trained for two years in general surgery. Then I decided that I wanted to pursue training in interventional radiology because I didn't have much experience with interventional radiology as part of my medical school. But when I got exposed to it, when I was in surgical training in the first couple of years, I basically fell in love with a specialty. So, I switched careers into interventional radiology, and then I moved to Georgetown University Hospital, where I trained for five years."

He added, "Part of the training is you have to be also trained in the diagnostic radiology, meaning, the part where you actually...double in on diagnostic and interventional radiology."

He said interventional radiology has always been part of the radiology department at MedStar St. Mary's.

As to why he got into the medical profession back in Jordan, he said, "I always had a passion to treat people and to take care of people. I've always been interested in healing body physiology. That always has fascinated me, and that's probably what guided me to do what I'm doing now. It's not only medicine, but this kind of medicine, because what I do is very dependent on how the systems in the body work together and they interact with each other and function in one system can affect a different system. So that is something

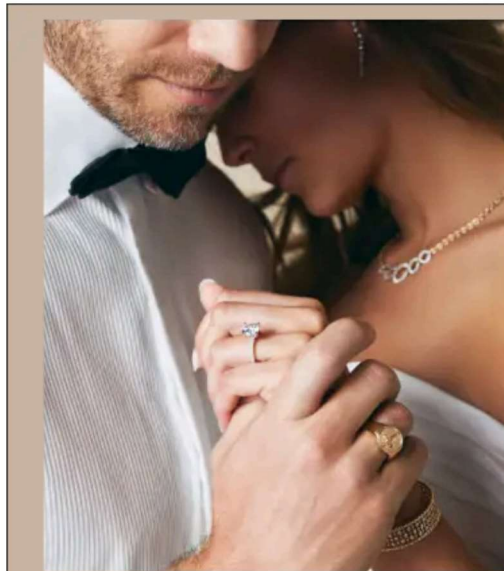


Dr. Moutasem Aljundi

that has always fascinated me as a kid."

He added, "I've always been watching videos on basically surgical procedures and how they're done. And I've always thought of the human body. Doctors who perform surgeries on human beings are more like human engineers if you want to think of it that way. I don't know if that's an appropriate way to put it. But basically the human body is probably the most sophisticated machine that is out there. And it's always been interesting to me to know how the human body works and how our organs, as tiny as they are, have many functions and we, as much as we know about them, we don't know much. And there's still a lot to know about. So that has always kept me excited about knowing more about it. And that's when I decided to medical school."

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