

Health

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center

Heart Shaken, Faith Restored.

Timely Cardiac Intervention
Saves Jim's Life.

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Advancing care, access, and community.

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Our work is rooted in a simple but powerful responsibility at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center: to care for the whole community. That means providing advanced treatment close to home, helping patients and families better understand their health, and building a culture where every person feels respected, supported, and seen.

That commitment is reflected in this issue of *Health*. You will read about rapid cardiac intervention that helped save the life of a father, grandfather, and Iraq war veteran after a STEMI heart attack, as well as important upgrades to our Electrophysiology Lab that expand access to advanced cardiac care here in Southern Maryland. You will learn how minimally invasive general surgery, da Vinci robotic technology, and innovative third-space digestive procedures are helping patients experience less pain, faster recovery, and more specialized care close to home.

As we recognized Juneteenth, I reflected on its significance as a celebration of the end of slavery and of the freedom, resilience, and contributions of Black Americans. At MedStar Health,



Our associates gathered to celebrate Juneteenth and reflect on the importance of the day.

Juneteenth is deeply connected to our mission. We work every day to break down barriers to care, advance access, and provide equitable, high-quality care for all members of our community.

You will also see that commitment in our investment in associate wellbeing, including the new Solarium Commons, and in programs like our Stroke Support Group, which creates space for recovery, connection, and shared support.

Across every story, our purpose remains the same: building better health through compassion, access, innovation, and trust.

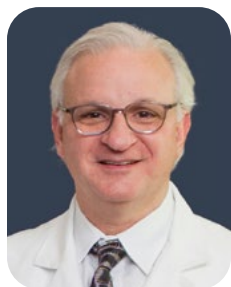
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Understanding radiation oncology: Separating myth from reality.

How modern radiation therapy is challenging outdated misconceptions.

Radiation therapy uses high-energy rays to shrink or destroy cancer cells. It is delivered directly to a targeted area, which helps limit damage to healthy surrounding tissue. Despite being a common and highly effective treatment for many types of cancer, some patients have negative preconceptions about what radiation therapy involves and are surprised to learn it may involve fewer side effects than treatments like chemotherapy.

These perceptions often stem from outdated information online or personal stories from friends and family, which—while well-intentioned—can create an inaccurate understanding of what radiation therapy is really like.



"There's a lot of noise to filter out about radiation," says **Andrew Satinsky, MD**, clinical director of the radiation oncology center at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital

Center. "In some cases, these misconceptions may lead people to delay or avoid care."

Advancements in radiation oncology have made treatment more targeted and manageable. Dr. Satinsky says understanding the process and what to expect can help patients feel more comfortable with treatment. When patients realize how effective modern radiation therapy can be, misconceptions are less likely to stand in the way of care.

Myth #1: Radiation therapy causes debilitating fatigue

While patients may experience some tiredness while receiving radiation therapy, especially when combined with chemotherapy, it is often far less severe than many patients expect.

"Most patients receiving radiation can continue working full time if they want to," says Dr. Satinsky. In fact, maintaining a regular routine can help reduce treatment-related fatigue. Physical activity, whether it's walking, yoga, or spending time at the gym, can also help patients maintain their energy levels throughout treatment.

Myth #2: Radiation causes whole-body side effects like hair loss and nausea

Another common misconception about radiation therapy is that it affects the entire body. In reality, radiation is highly targeted.

"Side effects are specific to the area we're treating," explains Dr. Satinsky. "For example, hair loss, when it occurs, is limited to the treatment area, not the whole body."

Many patients also worry about nausea and vomiting during cancer treatment. However, advances in radiation techniques and anti-nausea medications have dramatically reduced these effects. Today, most patients undergoing radiation—and many receiving chemotherapy—do not experience significant nausea.

Myth #3: Radiation treatment is painful and time-consuming

One of the most reassuring facts about radiation therapy is that the treatment itself is painless. "Radiation is like getting an X-ray," Dr. Satinsky says. "You don't feel anything during the treatment."

While the treatment itself is painless, some patients may experience side effects on or around the treatment area, such as radiation dermatitis, which can resemble a mild sunburn. These are typically monitored and often manageable with supportive care.

Appointments are also far more manageable than many patients expect. Treatments typically last only a few minutes, with most visits completed in about 30 minutes. Patients can usually drive to and from appointments and continue many of their daily activities.

Bridging the gap between perception and experience

For many patients, their first consultation with a radiation oncology specialist is a turning point. Having the opportunity to ask questions and speak directly with an expert often provides a clearer understanding of what treatment will involve and greater assurance that they'll be able to maintain their normal lifestyle.

"It's sort of a shift in understanding," says Dr. Satinsky. "Many patients are surprised by how manageable radiation therapy can be."



Visit [MedStarHealth.org/RadiationTherapy](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/RadiationTherapy) to learn more about radiation oncology services and visit [MedStarHealth.org/Satinsky](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Satinsky) to view **Dr. Satinsky's** full profile.



General surgery shifts to minimally invasive techniques for many procedures.

Robotic-assisted surgery offers patients faster recovery time.

With advancements in technologies, surgery today is safer, more efficient, and more convenient than ever. In the past, an “open” surgical approach was the norm—that is, the surgeon made a large cut (incision) to provide easy access for repair and a clear look at the anatomy in question. Laparoscopic surgery, in which surgeons manipulate instruments through small incisions, and 3D systems like the da Vinci 5 robotic surgical system, which use a console to control robotic arms for enhanced visualization and precision, are now preferred for most general surgery procedures—with improved results for patients.



Expanding the role of robotic surgery

“The volume and depth of these surgeries have increased over the years,” says **Michael Gillespie, MD**, colon and rectal surgeon at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center. “While laparoscopic surgery

still plays an important role, particularly for diagnoses and for certain patients, our surgical preference is the da Vinci system whenever possible.” Dr. Gillespie started the robotic surgery program at MedStar Southern Maryland in 2014. Since then, he’s performed over 800 surgeries robotically.



Stacey Martindale, MD, a general surgeon and critical care specialist at MedStar Southern Maryland, agrees. “The robotic surgical system is used even for emergency surgeries more often now. Most importantly, it helps us better meet the needs of our sicker surgical patients. Instead of

recovery taking six weeks, patients heal in two weeks from surgery with this minimally invasive approach,” she explains. That’s not to say all patients like the idea of robotic surgery when Dr. Martindale first describes the option. “The biggest misconception my patients

have at first is that a robot performs the surgery. I assure them that I control the robot from the start to finish of their surgery.”

Dr. Martindale helps patients understand how the technology works by sharing videos from her surgeries in the operating room, showing her controlling the robotic surgical system. “I’ve never once had a patient ask me not to use the robot after I’ve shown them videos of it,” she says.

Advancing care close to home

Other advantages of the da Vinci 5 robotic surgical system over earlier models include its more streamlined structure, which is better for smaller operating room spaces, Dr. Gillespie explains. The robotic arms are more agile and can swivel 360 degrees to access the operating site. The technology allows surgeons dealing with challenging procedures to be more efficient and helps patients recover faster, with less time under anesthesia.



The da Vinci 5 robotic surgical system improves efficiency in the operating room.



The robotic surgical system console screen provides enhanced, real-time 3D images of the operating site.

“It’s a big game changer. I’m so glad our program has expanded to include two da Vinci robotic systems, which means more patients can benefit.” According to Dr. Gillespie, the robotic system can manage procedures unthinkable just a few years ago, like bowel obstructions, with improved outcomes and decreased patient re-admissions to the hospital following surgery.

“With advanced technology and a skilled team, we’re here to deliver the best care for our community.”



Understanding general surgery and when it’s needed

General surgery is a medical specialty that concerns a range of procedures and techniques. Surgery may be elective—meaning you choose when and where to have it—or it may be needed urgently to treat a serious or life-threatening condition.

Common conditions treated with general surgery include:

- Abdominal conditions (appendicitis, gallbladder disease, hernias, colon and rectal conditions)
- Skin conditions and soft tissue injuries (cysts, skin lesions, torn tendons and ligaments)
- Digestive disorders (severe diverticulitis, conditions of the esophagus)
- Endocrine disorders (thyroid and adrenal gland conditions)
- Trauma (severe injuries and illnesses)



Visit [MedStarHealth.org/Gillespie](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Gillespie) and [MedStarHealth.org/Martindale](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Martindale) to view profiles of our providers or call **301-877-7202** to schedule an appointment.

Visit [MedStarHealth.org/daVinci](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/daVinci) to read more about the da Vinci robotic surgical system.



Groundbreaking procedures treat swallowing disorders and other digestive tract problems with less pain, faster recovery.

Introducing a specialized, less invasive approach to treatment.

Most of us don't think twice about the simple act of swallowing food. For some people, however, every meal can be uncomfortable—or even frightening. Food may feel stuck in the chest, come back up hours later, or trigger coughing and choking. Over time, these problems can lead to weight loss and anxiety around eating. For people experiencing any of these symptoms, evaluation by a specialist can diagnose the underlying condition.

“The esophagus is a tube that connects your throat to your stomach,” says **Camille Boustani, MD**, a gastroenterologist at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center. “When swallowing becomes difficult, it's often because the muscles in the esophagus are not working properly.”

Dr. Boustani received specialized training to perform a minimally invasive, organ-sparing procedure called peroral endoscopic myotomy (POEM) to correct swallowing problems. The technique is known as third-space endoscopy.

“I work within the lumen, or hollow part of the esophagus, and the layers of the gastrointestinal tract,” says Dr. Boustani. “This approach avoids external incisions and reduces trauma to the organ. Patients have less pain after the procedure and recover more quickly compared to open surgery.”

How POEM treats swallowing disorders

POEM can resolve a swallowing disorder known as achalasia, a serious but rare condition in which the muscle at the bottom of the esophagus stays too tight, preventing food or drink from entering the stomach.

“With the patient under general anesthesia, I pass a thin, flexible tube called an endoscope down the mouth and into the esophagus and create a small tunnel within the esophageal wall,” explains Dr. Boustani. “The tube has a light and camera so I can see images on a screen as I cut into the tight muscle to loosen it and then I close the internal incision. The patient usually goes home the same or next day.”

Minimally invasive removal of large polyps and early cancers

Endoscopic submucosal dissection (ESD) is a third-space procedure, similar to POEM, that Dr. Boustani uses to remove abnormal growths in the colon and rectum. "The incidence of colon cancer is steadily growing," says Dr. Boustani. "That's why it's so important that we have an alternative to major surgery to remove large, complex polyps that may be cancerous but are too big to remove during a colonoscopy."

ESD enables Dr. Boustani to work within the layer of tissue between the inner lining of the colon and the muscle wall. It also has the advantage of removing the polyp in one piece using specialized tools. "With our previous methods it would often come out in fragments, which can leave some parts behind," notes Dr. Boustani. "Removing the growth intact both helps the pathologist make an accurate diagnosis and also reduces the risk of leaving behind abnormal tissue, lowering the risk of recurrence."

Medical innovation benefits patients

"The evolving landscape of medicine is to treat patients in the most efficient, least invasive way," continues Dr. Boustani. "We have good evidence that third-space GI procedures are safe and effective and get the same or better outcomes as traditional open surgery. This is great news for our patients at MedStar Health."



Provider Spotlight

Camille Boustani, MD, is a gastroenterologist at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center who completed advanced fellowship training in minimally invasive endoscopy under one of the world's leading experts.

He specializes in treating complex polyps as well as precancerous and cancerous growths in the digestive tract. He also cares for patients who have swallowing disorders such as achalasia.

His expertise enables him to provide organ-sparing treatment options that replace traditional open-surgery procedures. His approach prioritizes what is best for each patient.



An endoscope is a long, thin, flexible tube with a tiny camera and light at the tip that provides a minimally invasive way to examine and treat a variety of conditions.



If swallowing has become difficult, call **301-877-4599** to schedule an evaluation and learn how POEM could help you back to comfortably eating and drinking again.

Visit [MedStarHealth.org/Boustani](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Boustani) to view **Dr. Boustani's** full profile.



Faith restored by timely intervention.

A life saved by divine intervention and immediate medical treatment.

For Jim Farr of Sykesville, Maryland, what started as an ordinary Wednesday ended up being one of the most momentous days of his 54 years. That day, Jim experienced a STEMI (ST-elevation myocardial infarction)—the deadliest type of heart attack. A STEMI occurs when a coronary artery is completely blocked, stopping blood flow to the heart muscle. If not treated immediately, it can cause permanent damage or death. But even in the midst of this life-threatening event, Jim still didn't think he was having a heart attack. "I imagined a heart attack was like what you see on TV," says Jim. "Someone clutching their chest as they fall to the ground. But it wasn't like that."

Jim had gone to his workplace near Camp Springs, and after walking up the stairs to his office, he remembered something he'd left in his car. Crossing the parking lot, Jim felt pressure in the center of his chest. "It was mild at first, but every time my heart beat it felt strange." The pain subsided as Jim returned to the building, but at the security turnstile, it returned—at first mild, but gradually, the pain intensified.

When the security guard asked if he was okay, Jim replied, "I think so. I'm going to grab my things and drive myself home."

Fortunately, a passerby who happened to be a former nurse dismissed that plan, telling Jim, "Oh, no. You sit right here and let's call an ambulance." Jim now realizes how lucky he was that she intervened. "Had I tried to drive home, I probably would have died."

"Time is muscle"

Most irreversible heart damage occurs within the first 60 to 120 minutes after a heart attack begins. That's why cardiologists say "time is muscle"—the longer the heart is deprived of blood, the more heart muscle is permanently damaged. The American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association established a "door-to-balloon" guideline recommending that no more than 90 minutes elapse between a patient's arrival at the emergency department and the reopening of the blocked artery. At MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, 100% of cardiac patients are seen far faster, with a median door-to-balloon time of 50 minutes—40 minutes faster than the benchmark.



Rimmy Farrakhan, MD, an interventional cardiologist at MedStar Southern Maryland, treated Jim. First, she performed a coronary angiogram, in which a thin tube was inserted through Jim's wrist up to his heart, so dye could be injected. Through imaging, the dye's path indicated

that Jim's artery was 99% blocked. Dr. Farrakhan then inserted wires into the artery, ballooned it out, and installed a stent.

Remarkably, this lifesaving procedure is minimally invasive, performed with only mild sedation. "I didn't feel much at all," recalls Jim. He was released the next day. Today, with medication and lifestyle changes, Jim feels great.

Heart attacks: manageable—and preventable

Classic heart attack symptoms include chest pain, shortness of breath, dizziness, radiating left-arm pain, nausea or vomiting, cold sweat, heartburn, and upper back or jaw pain. Symptoms may occur gradually, suddenly—or not at all. That's why it's important not to wait until symptoms appear to seek medical help. Though Jim had not experienced any noticeable symptoms, he did have two of the major risk factors: high blood pressure and high cholesterol. You're also at risk if you have diabetes, are a smoker, or are obese. Risks increase with age and family history.

Dr. Farrakhan notes that the key to prevention is early screening. "It used to be recommended to start checking cholesterol in adults in their 40s. But now it is age 19 regardless of gender. Earlier detection can reduce lifetime cardiovascular risk." Conditions like high blood pressure and high cholesterol can be modified with medication and with diet, exercise, and smoking cessation.



If you think you are experiencing heart attack symptoms, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department.

Dr. Farrakhan also underscores the importance of mental wellbeing. "A heart attack is a shock to your system. People can develop depression and anxiety, so through cardiac rehab we have mental health counselors to help."

"My faith in medicine has been restored by Dr. Farrakhan and my MedStar Health care team."

—Jim Farr

In fact, fearful anxiety is a subtle symptom some patients report. Prior to his STEMI, Jim had persistent worries about leaving his family unprepared if something bad happened to him—thoughts that never worried him before, even after 22 years in the military with tours in Iraq. Jim now says, "Since treatment, I haven't had those thoughts whatsoever."

He also has newfound confidence in his care. Jim says that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the abundance of conflicting information left him feeling uncertain about health care. "Now, my faith in medicine has been restored by Dr. Farrakhan and my MedStar Health care team." A father of five, Jim recently became a grandfather. "I'm here for a while. I have a lot to stick around for."



Jim has a lot to enjoy this summer after surviving his heart attack, including grilling and tending to his garden.



Visit **MedStarHealth.org/Farrakhan** to learn more about **Dr. Farrakhan** or call **301-877-5677** to schedule an appointment.

Visit **MedStarHealth.org/STEMI** to learn more about heart attack symptoms.

Prostate cancer: What every man should know.

The importance of early detection and treatment.

Chances are, you know someone who has been touched by prostate cancer, since 1 in 8 American men will be diagnosed, and it is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States. In 2022, Maryland had the country's second highest rate of new prostate cancers, with Prince George's, Charles, and Calvert counties having some of the highest incidence rates.



But there is good news, according to **Rohit V. Patil, MD**, a urologist at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center.

Prostate cancer is highly treatable—especially when detected early—with a five-year survival rate of nearly 99%.

Causes and risk factors

Prostate cancer occurs when genetic changes cause cells in the prostate—a walnut-sized gland that's part of the male reproductive system—to grow uncontrollably and become cancerous. Typically, growth is slow and easiest to treat when it's confined to the prostate and hasn't spread.

Risk increases with age, starting around 50. Men of African descent and those with a family history of prostate cancer are at higher risk. There's no known prevention, but a diet low in red or processed meats (such as the Mediterranean diet) may lower the risk of progression.

Early screening saves lives

Prostate cancer symptoms can include frequent or painful urination, blood in the urine or semen, or erectile dysfunction. But it often has no symptoms at all, which is why the American Cancer Society advises most men to get screened at age 50, but for those at higher risk, age 40 or 45. A simple blood test to determine one's PSA (prostate-specific antigen) level might be all it takes.

A normal PSA is under 4.0 ng/mL, but an elevated PSA doesn't necessarily indicate cancer. Some doctors will perform a digital rectal exam (DRE) to feel for unusual bumps or hard areas. The next step might be an MRI, followed by a biopsy—the definitive way to confirm a cancer diagnosis.

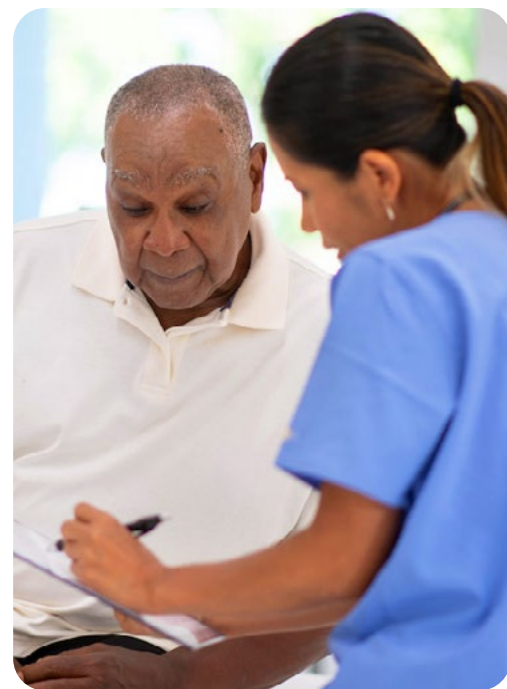
Many successful treatment options

Once diagnosed, cancer is initially graded based on its degree of abnormality and likelihood of growing. The standard grading, called the Gleason score, is now complemented by a more refined Grade Group score. These tools help determine the best treatments.

Even with a cancer diagnosis, for those in a favorable risk group or over 70, physicians may recommend active surveillance of the cancer to prevent progression. Otherwise, surgery to remove the prostate and some surrounding tissue is a strong option.

Patients may also undergo traditional external beam radiation, or brachytherapy, a targeted internal radiation that implants radioactive material directly inside a tumor. Some patients may qualify for focal therapies that treat only the cancerous areas as opposed to the entire prostate gland. These include cryotherapy, laser ablation, and high-intensity focused ultrasound (HIFU).

With treatment, good outcomes can typically be expected. "Depending on risk levels, the success rate for radiation and surgery is 90% to 97%," says Dr. Patil. "With early detection, treatment, and follow up, it's very possible to lead a normal, long, and healthy life with prostate cancer."



Visit **MedStarHealth.org/ProstateScreening** to learn more or talk with your primary care provider about scheduling a screening.

Visit **MedStarHealth.org/Patil** to view **Dr. Patil's** full profile or call **301-292-7270** to schedule an appointment.

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center earns national accreditation for high standards in breast care.



The Breast Health Program at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center has earned accreditation from the American College of Surgeons (ACS) National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers, recognizing our commitment to high-quality, comprehensive breast care.

This accreditation reflects nationally recognized standards for coordinated patient-centered care through every stage of their breast health journey: prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship.

“This recognition honors the dedication of our entire breast health team,” says **Patricia Wehner, MD**, breast surgeon at MedStar Southern Maryland. “Patients facing a breast concern or breast cancer diagnosis need clear communication, coordinated expertise, and compassionate support through every step of care. That is the level of care we are privileged to provide.”

The designation also recognizes MedStar Southern Maryland as an ACS Surgical Quality Partner, underscoring our ongoing commitment to quality, safety, and continuous improvement.



To learn more about the Breast Health Program at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, visit [MedStarHealth.org/BreastHealth](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/BreastHealth) or call **301-877-5607**.

Electrophysiology Lab upgrades bring advanced cardiac care closer to home.

For people with heart rhythm concerns, having advanced care close to home can make the path to treatment feel easier and more reassuring. Our recent electrophysiology (EP) lab renovation intends to do exactly that, significantly expanding access to advanced cardiac care in Southern Maryland.

With these enhancements, our team can now perform left-sided ablations for atrial fibrillation (AFib) locally, a major advancement for patients who previously needed to travel to MedStar Washington Hospital Center for this specialized procedure.

At the center of the update is a next-generation image-guided system designed to enhance precision, efficiency, and patient safety. With low-dose radiation technology and advanced 3D mapping and imaging, electrophysiologists can more precisely identify and treat abnormal heart rhythms.

The lab also includes advanced cardiac catheterization technology, including stent boost imaging and integrated visualization tools that help interventional cardiologists see coronary structures clearly while guiding procedures.

These tools support safer, more efficient procedures and expand the range of complex interventions available right here in our community. By bringing these advanced electrophysiology and interventional cardiology capabilities closer to home, our team at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center is helping our community stay healthier—without having to go far.



Electrophysiology Lab upgrades bring a new level of advanced cardiac care.



Epilepsy: Make time to learn the facts.

Understanding seizures and an epilepsy diagnosis.

Epilepsy can be a difficult condition to understand. It's important to learn the facts about this common and complicated chronic brain disorder, especially if you or a family member is newly diagnosed. Nearly 3 million adults and half a million children under age 17 in the United States have active epilepsy, also known as "seizure disorder." Anyone at any age can develop epilepsy, with diagnoses peaking for individuals in their 20s and 30s, then leveling off, and seizure risk spiking again between ages 60 to 80.

How seizures affect the brain and body

When a seizure occurs, an electrical surge in the brain causes groups of nerve cells known as neurons to misfire, sending explosions of electrical and chemical signals to your organs, other neurons, and muscles, triggering confusion instead of normal responses from your brain and body. This disturbance can have wide-ranging effects, depending on where in the brain the seizure originates. Involuntary movements, loss of awareness, changes in emotions or behaviors, confusion, and fatigue are among the most common seizure symptoms.

Causes of Seizures

For about half of people living with epilepsy, no known cause for their seizures will be identified. Seizures can also occur spontaneously, for no known reason. If a family member experiences seizures, you may be at greater risk, since there can be a genetic link to the disorder. The following conditions are known to trigger seizures:

- Brain tumors
- Infections
- Brain injuries
- Alzheimer's disease
- Stroke
- Certain medications
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- Abrupt withdrawal from certain medications or alcohol

“Whenever a person has a seizure, it’s important to see a specialist for testing to learn what could be causing it and identify an appropriate treatment plan,” says **Ahmareen Baten, MD**, a neurologist at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center. Dr. Baten treats individuals for neurological disorders, with a special focus on seizure disorders. For patients requiring an additional evaluation, advanced diagnostic and treatment technologies are available at the MedStar Health

Comprehensive Epilepsy Center, a level 4 center as designated by the National Association of Epilepsy Centers.

Having a seizure once does not necessarily mean you have epilepsy, explains Dr. Baten. In fact, most people who experience a single seizure will not have another. Epilepsy refers to a condition in which seizures recur. However, if imaging or other advanced testing reveals an underlying abnormality—or if additional seizures occur—a diagnosis of a seizure disorder may be made.

Types of seizures and epilepsy

Most seizures are classified in two broad categories: focal seizures and generalized seizures, with many subtypes in each category. A focal seizure originates in one part of the brain and may cause a change in consciousness, awareness, or sensation. A generalized seizure is triggered by abnormal activity occurring in both sides of the brain and may cause loss of consciousness and involuntary muscle movements—symptoms commonly associated with a seizure.

Hundreds of types of epilepsy have been identified with varied symptoms, but all types of epilepsy include seizure as a primary symptom. Epilepsy is commonly described by the area of the brain where the seizure starts, the symptoms

it causes, or the age group it affects—such as childhood epilepsy syndromes, for example.

Diagnosis and treatment for seizure disorder

Along with a neurological exam, blood tests, and possibly genetic testing, one or more brain scans can be involved in diagnosing seizures. Common technologies used to isolate abnormal brain activity are electroencephalogram (EEG), computerized tomography (CT), magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), positron emission tomography (PET), or single-photon emission computerized tomography (SPECT).

According to Dr. Baten, 65% to 70% of individuals who experience seizures will respond to medication and become seizure-free. In some cases, a ketogenic diet—high in fat and low in carbohydrates—may be included as part of an epilepsy treatment plan. When medication and dietary restrictions aren’t effective, brain stimulation therapies or surgery to the area of the brain affected by the abnormal electrical impulses causing the seizures may be recommended, with these surgical treatments available within the MedStar Health system. An extended evaluation in a hospital-based Epilepsy Monitoring Unit may be used to localize seizure activity.

“With treatment, epilepsy can be well-managed,” says Dr. Baten. “Many people experience fewer and less severe seizures over time, which can make a meaningful difference in their quality of life.”



View Dr. Baten’s profile at **MedStarHealth.org/Baten** or call **301-877-4540** to schedule an appointment.

Visit **MedStarHealth.org/Epilepsy** to learn more about symptoms and causes of seizures.

The Prince George's County Healthy Start program.

Building healthier beginnings for families.

For many families, the earliest stages of parenthood bring as many questions as they do moments of joy. Where do you go for guidance? How do you access care, classes, or even basic supplies? At MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, the Prince George's County Healthy Start program (PG Healthy Start) was created to answer those questions, not with a single resource but with a connected system of support designed to meet families where they are.

Launched just three years ago, PG Healthy Start has already enrolled more than 550 participants across Prince George's County, offering what program leaders describe as “wraparound services” that extend beyond traditional health care. Families who enroll gain access to care coordination, health education, and connections to critical services such as primary care; Ob/Gyn providers; Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); and transportation support. The program is open at no cost to any county resident who is pregnant, planning for pregnancy, or caring for a child up to 18 months old.

“We’re not just giving people resources: we’re helping them navigate what can feel like a very overwhelming system,” says Charmaine Ivey, director of Population and Community Health.

That philosophy shapes everything from the program's educational offerings to its community partnerships. Participants can attend classes on infant CPR, safe sleep, breastfeeding, and childbirth, often taught directly by nurses and lactation specialists who are also part of their care journey. These sessions do more than share knowledge: they help families build confidence and community with others navigating similar experiences.

That sense of connection comes to life most visibly at the program's annual Community Baby Shower and Resource Fair. Held this year on June 27 at the Prince George's Sports & Learning Complex, this event brought together more than 40 local organizations and hundreds of families in a single space. “It’s a space where families can come together, ask questions, and feel supported—not just for a day, but moving forward,” says Silvia Peñate, PG Healthy Start program manager.

The baby shower is more than a one-day gathering. It serves as an entry point into ongoing support. Families can leave not only with essential items—such as car seats, strollers, or baby supplies—but also with direct connections to services they can continue to rely on long after the event ends.

Program leaders say one of the most consistent messages they hear from participants is simple: gratitude. Many families are not aware of the resources available to them, or they struggle to navigate fragmented systems of care. “We hear all the time that people didn’t know where to start,” Silvia adds. “Our role is to be that starting point—and to stay with them as they move forward.” PG Healthy Start helps bridge that gap, creating a trusted “home base” that families can turn to for guidance, support, and connection.

As the program continues to grow, its focus remains clear: expanding access, strengthening community ties, and improving maternal and infant health outcomes across the county. For families seeking support—or simply a place to start—PG Healthy Start offers a pathway forward.



The annual baby shower event is an entry point into ongoing support—from pregnancy through early childhood.



Visit **[MedStarHealth.org/PGHealthyStart](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/PGHealthyStart)** to learn more or enroll in our free, community-centered program connecting families—from pregnancy through early childhood.



Our associates gathered to celebrate Juneteenth, and the continuing journey toward equity and inclusion.

Honoring Juneteenth with celebration.

In honor of Juneteenth, which commemorates the end of slavery in the U.S., our MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center associates took time to reflect on the importance of this day.

“This celebration is an important event here at MedStar Southern Maryland, as we work to break down barriers to care. It reflects our commitment to the diverse backgrounds we serve, and our unwavering dedication to providing equitable, quality care for all members of our community,” says **Karen Wyche, DNP, RN**, chief nursing officer and EI&D council chair at MedStar Southern Maryland.

The holiday reflects a turning point in our country’s history, a celebration of freedom, and a reminder that we should strive to build a better future for us all.

Solarium Commons for recharging and renewal.

A new outdoor patio space for wellness and peaceful enjoyment.

This spring, we proudly unveiled our newly designed outdoor patio space at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, complete with tables, chairs, and custom sunshades, offering visitors an opportunity to comfortably enjoy time outside throughout the day.

“Solarium Commons is a deeply meaningful example of what can happen when we listen to our associates and act on what we hear,” says **Stephen Michaels, MD**, president of MedStar Southern Maryland. “We heard the need for an outdoor space where people could step away, gather, enjoy lunch, or simply take a few quiet moments to recharge. Supporting wellbeing has to include creating spaces that help people feel restored during the day, and we are proud to help bring that vision to life for our associates, medical staff, patients, visitors, and families.”

Whether taking a break, connecting with loved ones, or simply enjoying some fresh air, we invite all to visit Solarium Commons to relax, recharge, and take a moment of peace and wellbeing.



Our new outdoor patio space, the Solarium Commons, was officially unveiled with a June grand opening ribbon-cutting event.



MedStar Health

7503 Surratts Rd.
Clinton, MD 20735

**MedStar Southern Maryland
Hospital Center**



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

Visit [MedStarHealth.org/OptOut](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/OptOut)
to be removed from future mailings.

Bimonthly Stroke Support Group.

Introducing our new Stroke Support Group at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, created to foster recovery, connection, and improved quality of life for individuals and families impacted by stroke.

Our Stroke Support Group is designed to be a welcoming community, offering individuals and families a chance to connect with others, access to valuable resources and information, and the opportunity to share stories and learn from others.

The group meets every other month from 2 to 3 p.m. at the Lakeside Building, 10403 Hospital Dr., Ste. G09A, Clinton, MD 20735.

Upcoming meeting dates and topics:

Sept. 9: Post-Stroke Depression

Nov. 11: Self-Care for Caregivers and the Community

We are committed to supporting the MedStar Southern Maryland community by offering opportunities for shared connection, experiences, and health care.



Please email msmhc-communityhealth@medstar.net
for more information or to register for our Stroke
Support Group.

**It's how we
treat people.**