

Health



**Our
Heart
Health
Issue**

**Surviving a
Heart Attack:
Tracey's Story**

**Understanding
Coronary Artery
Disease**

Meet Our
Newest
Specialists

Letter from the president.

Dear Neighbor,

February is American Heart Health month, a time to focus on the number one killer in the United States - heart disease. According to the American Heart Association:

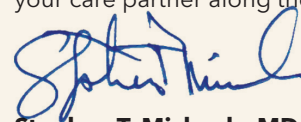
- Approximately every 40 seconds, someone in the United States will have a heart attack.
- Cardiovascular disease claims more lives each year in the United States than all forms of cancer and Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease (CLRD) combined.

These are certainly sobering statistics. But there is a silver lining. The cardiology specialists at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center continue to break new ground in the fight against heart disease. Combining clinical expertise with cutting-edge technology and innovative procedures, we're helping more men and women in our community live longer, healthier lives. Take Tracey Patten, for example, a patient who, at age 46, suffered a major heart attack. Thanks to specialists like our interventional cardiology team, Tracey is here to share her story and why it is so important for women especially to listen to their bodies. This includes pregnant women who are not immune to conditions such as high blood pressure. Our OB/GYNs discuss why pregnant women in particular must keep a close eye on hypertension.

Over the past year, we've added several highly skilled cardiac specialists who are enhancing the care our teams provide for patients with heart failure and coronary artery disease. We've added advanced technology that breaks up coronary artery blockages without surgery using shockwave therapy and a new Coronary Microvascular Dysfunction (CMD) Program that utilizes an advanced software-based platform to measure the efficiency of the heart's smallest arteries.

When in doubt, your primary care provider is a great place to start when any sign of a heart problem arises. MedStar Southern Maryland's primary care and cardiology providers work with our patients to treat cardiovascular and coronary artery disease utilizing the many tools available to help our community stay heart-healthy for the long term.

In this new year, we hope that you will turn to us for exceptional cardiac care. Heart health is a journey and we're proud to be your care partner along the way.



Stephen T. Michaels, MD, FACHE
President, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center
Senior Vice President, MedStar Health



Stephen T. Michaels, MD, FACHE
President, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center



MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center
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Some photos were selected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. All patients and providers are expected to follow the current MedStar Health guidelines for safety including proper masking and physical distancing where appropriate. Learn more at [MedStarHealth.org/Safe](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Safe).

Health is published as a community service for the friends and patrons of MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center. It in no way seeks to diagnose or treat illness or serve as a substitute for professional medical care. Please see your physician if you have a health problem.



Tidbits

1

Sign of the Times

Have you seen MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center's new sign? Recently installed on the hill at the intersection of Route 5 and Surratts Road, the new electronic sign is a welcoming sight for all patients and visitors. Make sure to check it out for the latest community event and health updates!



2



Enhancing CMD Diagnosis Through Technology

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center's new Coronary Microvascular Dysfunction (CMD) Program is changing the way this elusive heart condition is identified. Utilizing the advanced software-based platform called Coroventis CoroFlow Cardiovascular System, cardiologists can now provide a more definitive diagnosis and treatment plan for patients. Turn to page 14 to see how this new technology is changing lives.

3



HONORING NURSES INTERNATIONALLY
IN MEMORY OF J. PATRICK BARNES

DAISYs For Our Nurses

What better way to recognize the extraordinary care nurses provide our patients every day than with a DAISY Award? Given to a deserving nurse twice a year, patients share their stories of compassion and excellence and give thanks to deserving nurses who have gone above and beyond. Read more about the DAISY award on page 15.

4



Reducing Mental Illness Stigma

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center recently served as the site for the local first responder Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training, focusing on how first responders can recognize and better understand the emotional and psychological effects of a person in crisis during an emergency call. The program helps reduce the stigma that surrounds mental illness in our community. See page 15 to learn more.



Listen to Your Heart

Quick thinking, Expert Care Helps One Patient Survive Major Heart Attack

When Tracey Patten, 46, woke up to a crushing pressure in her chest, she knew something was not right. She had surgery only one week prior and thought perhaps her body was still recovering from the trauma of surgery. As she fixed herself a cup of tea to see if the pressure would subside, she broke out in a full body, drenching sweat. Just making her way from the kitchen to the couch in her living room was exhausting. She knew something was very wrong. Her friend immediately called 9-11 and paramedics were quickly on the scene.

Tracey was having a heart attack.

In the ambulance on the way to MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, Tracy's left arm began to hurt. "My left arm felt like it was suddenly 1,000 pounds and by this time I was really panicked," she recalled.

Upon arrival, Ms. Patten was met by interventional cardiologist Brian Case, MD, who, along with an interventional cardiology team, went to work quickly to stabilize her condition in the cardiac catheterization lab. Dr. Case performed a heart catheterization procedure where a tiny catheter was threaded through the patient's wrist to open up the main coronary artery of the heart which was 100% blocked. A stent was then placed to restore blood flow to the heart.

"Although Ms. Patten presented with classic symptoms for a heart

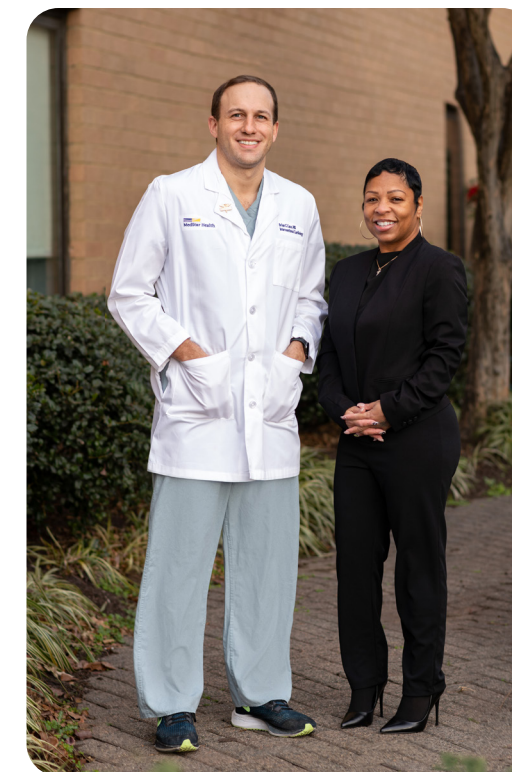
attack—chest pain, shortness of breath, sweating, and pain in the left arm—it is important to note that not all patients will have these 'classic' signs," explained Dr. Case. "Sometimes patients, specifically women or those patients with diabetes, experience symptoms of heartburn, indigestion, or fatigue and are still having a heart attack. It is important for people in the community to not ignore their symptoms."

Family History and Cardiac Symptoms

Ms. Patten is no stranger to the perils of heart disease. Her mother died of an aneurysm in 2002, her father passed away from a heart attack in 2020, and her brother also died from a major heart attack. Her high blood pressure and strong family history of heart disease made her a prime candidate for a cardiac event.

Fortunately, three days after her heart attack and the stent placement, Ms. Patten was back home and on the road to recovery. Thirty-eight days later, she was back at work. "The doctors told me that most people do not survive the type of heart attack I had," she said. "Dr. Case is my hero. Because of the decisions he made that day, I am here to tell my story. He saved my life."

"Listen to your body," Ms. Patten added. "If I didn't know my body, I may not have sought help. I am forever grateful to have survived."



To make an appointment with Dr. Case, please call **301-877-5677**. Or to learn more, visit [MedStarHealth.org/Case](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Case).

What Women Should Know About High Blood Pressure in Pregnancy



Pregnancy is hard work, especially for a woman's heart. Cardiac conditions such as high blood pressure in pregnancy carry risks to the mother and unborn baby, which is why it is important to recognize the first signs of a problem. A condition that often has no initial symptoms, hypertension, or high blood pressure, is defined as blood pressure at or above 140/90.

According to OB/GYN Laura Houenou, MD, there are several categories of high blood pressure in pregnancy:

- Chronic hypertension, which is high blood pressure that is present before pregnancy or that develops in the early weeks of the pregnancy.
- Gestational hypertension which develops after 20 weeks and needs close monitoring.
- Preeclampsia, typically experienced after 20 weeks of pregnancy, presents as very high blood pressure plus protein in the urine. This condition affects organs such as the liver and kidneys, and, in the most severe cases, the brain in the form of seizures (known as eclampsia). Usually, the only treatment for preeclampsia is delivery.

High blood pressure happens in 1 in every 12 to every 17 pregnancies in the U.S.
-hearttruth.gov

"Pregnant women should watch out for warning signs of preeclampsia which includes a headache that doesn't improve with Tylenol, vision changes (seeing stars or light flashes), swelling in the face, arms, or legs, sudden right upper abdominal pain, nausea/vomiting, or sudden chest pain and shortness of breath. If any of these symptoms develop, contact your healthcare provider as soon as possible or go to the nearest hospital for evaluation," said Dr. Houenou.

OB/GYN Aliaa Makkiya, MD, added "High blood pressure in pregnancy can also pose risks to the unborn baby including Intrauterine Growth Restriction (IUGR), and a risk of placental abruption which puts the patient and the fetus at risk of major complications or death."

Who's at Risk?

OB/GYN Neha Chavali, MD, explained that there are several factors that put a woman at risk for developing pregnancy-related hypertensive conditions including:

- Having high blood pressure before pregnancy
- Being under the age of 20 or over 40 years old
- Previous preeclampsia
- First pregnancy
- Preexisting cardiovascular conditions and a family history of hypertension
- Obesity

"Even women without any risk factors can develop hypertension in pregnancy," said Dr. Chavali. "In women with a history of hypertensive disorders in prior pregnancies, I recommend early care and initiation of baby aspirin to reduce the chances of hypertensive disorders later in the pregnancy."

"Prenatal care is a partnership between a woman and her OB/GYN. Follow a consistent schedule for appointments so that your provider can carefully watch for any warning signs of hypertensive disorders to catch them early," recommends Dr. Makkiya. "Pregnancy is a journey. It's important to take it one step at a time."



Physician Profiles:



Aliaa Makkiya, MD,
Obstetrics and Gynecology

Aliaa Makkiya, MD, a practicing OB/GYN for more than a decade,

joined MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center in December 2022. She received her M.BCh.B (medical degree equivalent) from the University of Baghdad in Iraq, started an OB/GYN residency at Hamad Medical Corporation in Doha, Qatar and Dubai Residency Program-Department of OB/GYN at the Department of Health and Medical Services in Dubai, UAE. She completed her

residency in the Department of OB/GYN at Central Michigan University, Saginaw, MI.

Care philosophy:

"I am passionate about providing excellent care and truly listening to the concerns and needs of women. I enjoy all aspects of obstetrics and gynecology from the management of gynecologic conditions to performing minimally invasive GYN procedures. I treat patients like my family. My goal is to help women through the journey of pregnancy, and beyond."



Laura Houenou, MD,
Obstetrics and Gynecology

Laura Houenou, MD, MSPH, believes in patient care that helps

educate as well as treat. An OB/GYN at MedStar Health since 2018, Dr. Houenou received her Doctor of Medicine degree at the University of Virginia School of Medicine and completed her residency training in obstetrics and gynecology at MedStar Washington Hospital Center/ MedStar Georgetown University Hospital in Washington DC. She holds a Master of Science in Public Health (MSPH) from the

University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill.

Care Philosophy:

"Knowledge is empowering. I believe in taking the time to communicate with patients in a non-clinical manner to help them better understand their own health so they can make informed decisions about their care. As healthcare providers, we are challenged with combatting myths and disinformation. I believe in treatment with education for the most optimal care for my patients."



To schedule an appointment with Dr. Houenou or Dr. Makkiya, please call **301-645-8867**.



3500 Old Washington Road Suite 302
Waldorf, MD 20602



Neha Chavali, MD,
Obstetrics and Gynecology

Neha Chavali, MD, is an OB/GYN at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center's Clinton location. She received her medical degree from Northeast Ohio Medical University in Rootstown, OH and completed her obstetrics and gynecology residency at Henry Ford Health System in Detroit, MI where she also served as Chief of OB/GYN medical student education.

Care philosophy:

"I believe everyone deserves access to comprehensive and non-judgmental obstetrical and gynecologic health care which is what I aim to provide. I chose the field of OB/GYN because I've always been passionate about reproductive health and access to women's health care, and this field allows me to pursue that passion."



To schedule an appointment with Dr. Chavali, please call **301-877-7200**.



7501 Surratt's Road
Suite 308
Clinton, MD 20735



What is Coronary Artery Disease (CAD)?

By Sonia Samtani, MD, FACC, FSCAI
MedStar Shah Medical Group, Cardiology



Coronary artery disease (CAD) is the leading cause of mortality in the United States. It accounts for approximately 610,000 deaths annually (estimated 1 in 4 deaths) in the United States. It is caused by a build-up of plaque in the blood vessels, or coronary arteries, which supply the heart muscle with oxygenated blood. As plaque builds up, the arteries narrow, causing blockages that limit blood flow and cause damage or death to the heart muscle. Blockages in the heart arteries can lead to heart attacks.

What are the risk factors for coronary artery disease?

Risk factors for CAD can be grouped as non-modifiable and modifiable risk factors.

Non-modifiable risk factors include:

- **Age**—the prevalence of CAD increased after the age of 35 in both men and women.
- **Sex**—Men are at an increased risk of coronary artery disease than women.
- **Ethnicity**—Blacks, Hispanics, and Southeast Asians are at higher risk.

- **Family history**—Patients with a father or brother diagnosed with CAD before 55 years of age, and a mother or sister diagnosed before 65 years of age are considered at higher risk.

What are the modifiable risk factors?

The major modifiable risk factors include:

- Hypertension or high blood pressure
- Hyperlipidemia (high cholesterol)
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Smoking
- Sedentary lifestyle
- Poor diet

How can I assess my risk for cardiovascular disease?

Risk assessment for cardiovascular disease can be done with your primary care provider or cardiologist. A thorough evaluation involves measurement of your blood pressure, as well as a cholesterol panel.

One of our mainstays for evaluation is the Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease (ASVCD) risk calculator, which can determine your percentage of risk for cardiovascular disease or stroke in 10 years. Higher-risk individuals are advised to begin diet and lifestyle

management initiatives for cardiovascular risk reduction as well as medication for the treatment of high cholesterol.

Other risk assessment tools your cardiologist may recommend include imaging studies such as coronary calcium score or a cardiac MRI, a stress test, or cardiac catheterization.

What is an optimal blood pressure?

Blood pressure targets vary for patients depending on their age and risk factors. In general, blood pressure should be less than 130/80mmHg.

What should my cholesterol be?

The two types of cholesterol in the blood are HDL and LDL. HDL is considered protective. The higher the HDL number the more protective your cholesterol profile is. A goal of LDL less than 55 is recommended based on the newest guidelines.

What are recommended diets for cardiovascular risk reduction?

- The Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet consists of low sodium foods that are rich in potassium, calcium, magnesium, fiber, and lean protein.
- The Mediterranean diet, a more plant-based approach, has been shown in studies to have a 20-25% risk reduction for cardiovascular disease. Whole grains, vegetables, legumes, fruits, nuts, seeds, herbs, and

spices are the foundation of the diet. Fish, seafood, dairy, and poultry are included in moderation. Red meat and sweets are eaten rarely. Olive oil is the main source of added fat.

- A vegetarian or plant-based diet consists mostly of vegetables, fruits, legumes, nuts, whole grains, and fish. In one study, individuals who ate a plant-centered diet were 52% less likely to develop cardiovascular disease over 30 years.

How much exercise should I be doing to decrease my cardiovascular risk?

The most active patients have a 35 to 40% risk reduction for CAD; however, any amount of physical activity has been shown to have

benefits in reducing risk. The recommendation is to aim for 30 minutes of moderate aerobic exercise five times per week which can include walking, jogging, riding a bike, and swimming.

What are other beneficial lifestyle modifications for minimizing coronary artery disease?

- Quitting smoking.
- Diagnosing obstructive sleep apnea. Patients with sleep apnea often have uncontrolled hypertension and are at increased risk of cardiovascular disease.
- Manage diabetes. Making sure your sugar is well controlled if you have diabetes can help to minimize CAD risk.



Dr. Sonia Samtani is a fellowship-trained cardiologist with MedStar Shah Medical Group. She sees patients at Lakeside Medical Center in Clinton, MD. To schedule a consultation with Dr. Samtani, call **301-705-7870**.



New Heart Failure Specialist Provides Needed Access to Advanced Cardiac Care

Rania Kaoukis, MD, an advanced heart failure specialist, joined MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center in November 2022. Board-certified in advanced heart failure/cardiac transplantation, cardiology, echocardiography, nuclear cardiology, and internal medicine, Dr. Kaoukis specializes in the treatment and management of patients with congestive heart failure, end-stage heart failure, and ischemic and non-ischemic cardiomyopathies (cardiac diseases where the weakened heart can no longer pump enough blood throughout the body).

What is a heart failure specialist?

An advanced heart failure specialist is a cardiologist who specializes in evaluating and managing patients with this chronic condition, particularly those with advanced heart failure, patients with devices including ventricular assist devices, and those who have undergone or are awaiting transplantation. With heart failure, the heart muscle can become weak or stiff over time causing symptoms that include shortness of breath, fatigue, limitations in exercising, an irregular heartbeat, and the accumulation of fluid in the body.

"We can manage heart failure with medications, implantable devices such as specialized pacemakers or a Left Ventricular Assist Device (LVAD), or lastly, heart transplantation," explained Dr. Kaoukis. "Heart failure cardiologists follow patients closely to better understand their disease process

as well as the social aspects of care that affect someone's health."

"Having a heart failure physician in the community is an important bridge to getting those patients the care they need. As a heart failure specialist who has been trained within the MedStar Health system, I like being that link for my patients," she said.

Dr. Kaoukis received her medical degree from the Indiana University School of Medicine.

She completed an internal medicine residency at Loyola University Medical Center and a three-year cardiovascular fellowship at Temple University Hospital. She then completed advanced fellowship training in heart failure and transplantation at MedStar Washington Hospital Center. She is a member of the American College of Cardiology and the American College of Physicians.

Care philosophy:

"I treat every patient as a whole. I believe it's essential to understand

the medical needs as well as the psychosocial needs of my patients to deliver the most optimal care. I am committed to staying up-to-date on new and breakthrough medications and therapies to offer my patients the most appropriate care for their diagnosis."



Rania Kaoukis, MD
Heart Failure and Transplantation Cardiology, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center



From Ethiopia to Southern Maryland—New Interventional Cardiologist Brings a Unique Perspective to Cardiology

Growing up in Ethiopia, Nardos Temesgen, MD, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital's newest interventional cardiologist, always knew she would become a doctor. "It was always my dream to go into medicine," she said. "Now, working at one of the region's largest heart and vascular institutes in a discipline of cardiology that is on the cutting edge is a dream come true."

After moving to the U.S. with her family when she was 17, Dr. Temesgen attended Virginia Commonwealth University for her undergraduate studies and then Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine in Ohio for her medical degree. She returned to the Washington, DC region to complete her internal medicine residency and cardiology and interventional cardiology fellowships at The George Washington University School of Medicine before joining the interventional cardiology team at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center.

What is Interventional Cardiology?

Interventional cardiology treats heart conditions such as blocked arteries or structural defects using minimally invasive, nonsurgical procedures. These catheter-based techniques involve the use of a small, flexible tube that is inserted in the radial artery in the wrist (known as transradial

catheterization) and threaded up to the heart to visualize and repair damaged vessels, blocked arteries that lead to heart attack, or other cardiac abnormalities such as valve defects. These procedures are performed in a dedicated cardiac catheterization lab utilizing advanced imaging and technology. Patients benefit from a quicker recovery time, less pain, and less time in the hospital. For some patients, these procedures can be done on an outpatient basis.

"Think of an interventional cardiologist as a plumber. We clear up blockages in clogged pipes, or in this case, arteries. We fix these blockages with stents which hold the sides of the arteries open to improve blood flow to the heart," explained Dr. Temesgen. "We also repair defects and replace leaking or damaged heart valves without the need for an open, invasive surgery. The

benefits to our patients are many."

Care philosophy: "Understanding the differences in the healthcare systems of two very different countries has made me a more compassionate doctor. I relate to my patients on a personal level."



Nardos Temesgen, MD
Interventional Cardiology, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center



MedStar Health – Where and When You Need Us in Southern Maryland



Whether you are looking for primary care, a virtual appointment, or surgical expertise, MedStar Health has a location near you to meet all your healthcare needs.



MedStar Health Urgent Care - Waldorf

When illness or non-life threatening injuries happen, trust the convenience of MedStar Health Urgent Care in Waldorf. Our urgent care centers provide the care needed in one location from laboratory services and X-rays to routine vaccinations and treatments for common illnesses and minor injuries. Our team of providers care for patients of all ages at four locations including:

 MedStar Health: Urgent Care in Waldorf at Festival Way
3064 Waldorf Market Place
Waldorf, MD 20603




 MedStar Health: Urgent Care in Waldorf at Shoppers World
3350 Crain Hwy.
Waldorf, MD 20603



MedStar Shah Medical Group of Waldorf

This modern Charles County medical facility brings high-quality care to the community. Offering a wide range of services in one location, a team of physicians in the same building work together to provide a seamless, comprehensive model of patient care that offers access to necessary medical services in one building. These services include a walk-in primary care clinic, cancer center, pharmacy, diagnostic radiology services (CT scans and MRIs), surgical specialties, and medical specialists such as cardiologists, neurologists, pulmonologists, cancer specialists, and more.

 MedStar Shah Medical Group of Waldorf
10 St. Patrick's Drive
Waldorf, MD

 P 301-705-7870



MedStar Health: Medical Centers at Brandywine and Mitchellville

Bringing together MedStar Health specialists in primary and specialty care from around the region in one convenient location, the Medical Center at Brandywine serves patients throughout Prince George's, Charles, and St. Mary's counties. Services accessible at this center include:

- Bariatrics
- Ear, Nose, and Throat
- Heart and Vascular
- Laboratory Services
- Maternal Fetal Medicine
- Orthopedics
- Outpatient Surgery Center
- Pain Management
- Physiatry
- Physical Therapy and Rehabilitation
- Podiatric Surgery
- Primary Care
- Radiology
- Rheumatology
- Urology
- Urogynecology
- Gastroenterology




 MedStar Health: Medical Centers at Brandywine
13950 Brandywine Rd.
Brandywine, MD 20613
P 301-782-2220

 MedStar Health: Medical Centers at Mitchellville
Mitchellville Plaza,
12158 Central Ave.,
Mitchellville, MD 20721
P 301-430-2700

In Mitchellville, our high quality healthcare services are designed to meet the needs of the entire family, from primary care and women's health services to onsite radiology, lab services, physical therapy, and rehabilitative services.

Physicians from MedStar Georgetown University Hospital and MedStar Washington Hospital Center bring high quality specialty care, including breast surgery, cardiology, colorectal surgery, dermatology, endocrinology, endocrine surgery, plastic surgery, radiation oncology, sports medicine, urogynecology, urology, and more.



 7501 Surratts Road,
Clinton, MD 20735

MedStar Southern Maryland Professional Office Building

The MedStar Southern Maryland Professional Office Building, conveniently located right next to MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center, is home to several medical specialties, including:

- MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center
- MedStar Health Gastroenterology at MedStar Southern Maryland
- MedStar Health Vascular Surgery and Non-Invasive Vascular Laboratory
- MedStar Health General Surgery at MedStar Southern Maryland
- MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute at MedStar Southern Maryland
- MedStar Regional Breast Health Program
- MedStar Health Plastic and Reconstruction Surgery at MedStar Southern Maryland
- MedStar Medical Group Women's Health at Clinton

Tidbit

New Coronary Microvascular Dysfunction Program Enhances Diagnosis Through Innovative Technology

Coronary Microvascular Dysfunction (CMD) is a condition in which the smallest arteries of the heart do not relax properly, resulting in a lack of oxygen-rich blood flowing to the heart. A condition that is more common in women, symptoms of CMD and coronary artery disease or a heart attack can be frighteningly similar including chest pain, shortness of breath, fatigue, and discomfort in the left arm, jaw, neck, or back. CMD, however, has historically been a difficult-to-diagnose condition as more traditional diagnostic tests such as an angiogram (an x-ray of the heart that can identify blockages in major arteries) do not pick up the small arteries involved with CMD.

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center's new Coronary Microvascular Dysfunction Program is now changing the way CMD is identified in patients.

One of the few centers in the region to utilize the advanced software-based platform called Coroventis CoroFlow Cardiovascular System, the technology is able to measure the efficiency of the heart's tiny arteries and assess for adequate blood flow. The system uses a special guidewire threaded into the coronary artery during a procedure performed in the hospital's cardiac catheterization lab. This guidewire measures the blood flow in the arteries and the CoroFlow system then determines whether these small arteries are

functioning properly, helping the physician confirm the cause of a patient's unexplained chest pain and rule out other heart-related conditions such as blockages of the major coronary arteries.

Interventional cardiologist and member of the MedStar Heart & Vascular Institute Brian C. Case, MD, said, "This new program and advanced technology provides a definitive diagnosis and a clear path to effective treatment for many people in our community."



For more information or to make an appointment with one of our interventional cardiologists, call **301-877-5677**.



Cardiac Catheterization Lab at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center

Tidbit

DAISY Award Program Recognizes Our Extraordinary Nurses

MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center honors its remarkable nurses and the compassionate and skilled care they provide with the DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses. The DAISY Award, which stands for Diseases Attacking the Immune System, was established in 1999 in memory of J. Patrick Barnes, who was hospitalized for eight weeks and died from an autoimmune disease. The DAISY Award was born out of the extraordinary care the family received from the team of nurses who cared for Patrick throughout his illness. The award is a way for

other patients, families, and staff to publically say 'thank you' to nurses for the compassionate care they provide each and every day.

"Our nurses give their all to the patients and families who turn to us for care every day. This special award allows us to recognize and celebrate those nurses who have gone above and beyond to provide exceptional clinical care and who exemplify true compassion and humanity in healthcare," said Cody Legler, DNP, Chief Nursing Officer and Vice President, Nursing.



SCAN ME

The DAISY award is presented to a deserving nurse twice a year. Recognize one of MedStar Southern

Maryland's amazing nurses with the DAISY award—share your story by completing and submitting the online nomination form: <http://www.daisynomination.org/4489> or scan the QR code from a smartphone camera to access the nomination form.

Tidbit

Crisis Intervention Training: Reducing Stigma Surrounding Mental Illness at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center

On December 1, 2022, MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center served as the site for the local first responder Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training. The CIT program provides the foundation necessary to promote community and statewide solutions to assist individuals with mental illness. Ten community first responders attended the half-day program which was led by Corina Freitas MD, MSc, MBA, Department Chair and Medical Director of Psychiatry at MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center. The training, which is held four times each year, focused on the importance of recognizing the emotional and psychological effects of a person in crisis to help reduce the stigma that surrounds mental illness and included conversations with patients

at the hospital for a first-person viewpoint.

According to Dr. Freitas, "This valuable community program improves officer and patient safety and helps to redirect individuals with mental illness from the judicial system to the healthcare system. MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center has been a long-term partner in this training course which is an essential part of our commitment to the community."

"This training provides local law enforcement with the opportunity to see what happens when they send people in crisis to hospitals," said Monica Grey-Coker, CIT Coordinator for Prince George's County. "During the hospital tour, the first responders had the chance to talk to actual patients and get their perspective on the importance of how they respond to people with mental illness during an emergency call."





Ask a Primary Care Provider:



Top Reasons Why Your PCP Will Refer You to a Cardiologist

Picture this: A fifty-something male patient who has not seen a primary care provider (PCP) for a regular exam in several years makes an appointment after experiencing intermittent chest pain. Upon intake of the patient's medical history, the provider learns that the patient has diabetes and high blood pressure. After a thorough exam, the patient is started on medication to get his diabetes and high blood pressure under control.

The visit ends with a prescription for a follow-up appointment and a referral to a cardiologist.

"Patients should consider their primary care provider their home base. In the case of cardiac symptoms, we are the patient's first line of contact. Our providers have a close working relationship with Medstar Health cardiology so that when we refer patients, there is excellent coordination of care that is critical to their long-term health," explained Sloan McCoy, MSN, CRNP, FNP-C, Family Nurse Practitioner, and Facility Medical Director of Primary Care at Medstar Health at Brandywine.

3 Reasons Why PCPs Refer Patients to a Cardiologist

1. Cardiac symptoms.

For complaints of chest pain,

dizziness, shortness of breath, or an irregular heartbeat, a PCP will typically refer the patient to a heart specialist for additional testing. Testing may include bloodwork, an electrocardiogram (EKG), which measures the heart's rhythm, echocardiogram, and an exercise stress test to monitor the strength of the heart muscle under stress. Fluid in the lungs or a complaint of increased leg swelling may be a sign of congestive heart failure, especially in individuals with other cardiac symptoms, which is another reason a patient will be sent to a cardiologist.

2. Preexisting conditions and multiple risk factors.

A medical history that is a combination of diabetes, high blood pressure, and/or high cholesterol warrants a visit with a cardiologist. This common triad of health conditions has a strong chance of turning into heart disease. Patients who are obese, smoke, or have other risk factors such as a family history of heart disease should also be followed closely by their primary care provider and cardiologist.

3. Pregnancy complications.

Pregnancy-related complications such as preeclampsia or

gestational hypertension increase a woman's risk of developing heart disease later in life. These women may benefit from follow-up care by a cardiologist, especially if cardiac symptoms emerge after pregnancy.

"Don't ignore what your body is telling you," emphasized Mrs. McCoy. "If you're experiencing any new onset of cardiac symptoms and/or have a family history of heart disease, it is important to get evaluated by your primary care provider and a referral to a cardiologist to rule out any conditions of the heart."

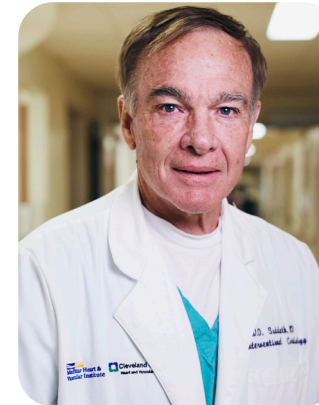


Sloan McCoy, CRNP

Family Nurse Practitioner, Facility Medical Director of Primary Care at MedStar Health at Brandywine

Heart & Soul

Helping you get to the heart of the matter.



William Suddath, MD
Chairman, Cardiology
MedStar Southern Maryland
Hospital Center



February is National Heart Month!



A message from MedStar Southern Maryland Hospital Center's chairman of cardiology.

Dear Community Member:

February is National Heart Month, which makes it an appropriate time to reflect on the controllable issues associates with cardiovascular disease.

For decades, we have researched the role of hypertension, high cholesterol, obesity, and diabetes as contributors to the early onset of cardiovascular disease. Data collected over the past fifty years confirms and strongly suggests that controlling and or reversing these issues substantially reduces the risk of not only developing, but also the continued progression of, cardiovascular disease. The risk of death decreases, and the morbidity associated with these variables is reduced as well. As a means to begin addressing our risks, and as a way to measure our progress, we have collected four relatively easy numbers to recognize and follow regularly to reduce our potential for the development of cardiovascular disease. These lifesaving numbers are a direct reflection of our commitment to ourselves and our loved ones.

To know and understand what numbers you should be monitoring to understand the status of your health, please see the next page, where we outline four aspects of your health that you should know.

In good heart health,

William Suddath, MD

Chairman, Cardiology
MedStar Southern Maryland
Hospital Center



The Medical Center at Brandywine is located at 13950 Brandywine Rd., and is a state-of-the-art, 60,000-square-foot center serving Prince George's, Charles, and St. Mary's counties with primary and multi-specialty care including cardiology. For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact **301-782-2220**.



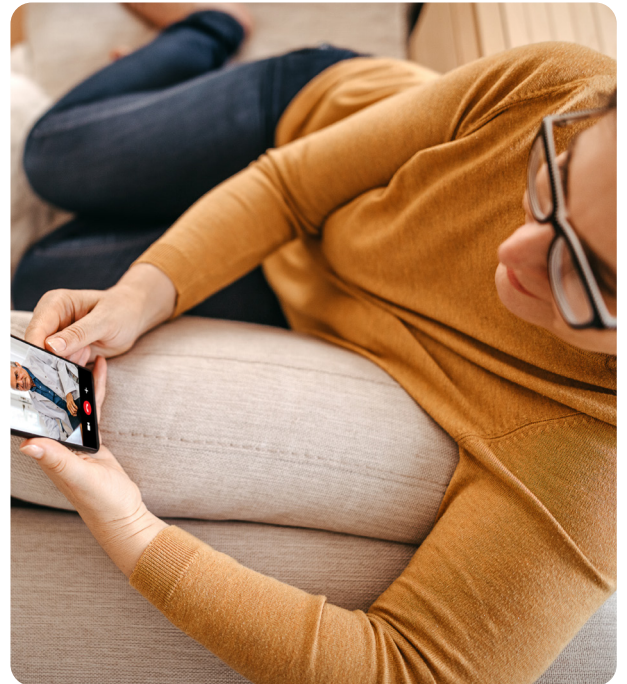
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