

# MedStar Georgetown MD

A MedStar Georgetown University Hospital Publication

## Routine Screening, Lifesaving Referral, and Advanced Procedure Prevent Esophageal Cancer BY EMILY TURK

**Financial powerhouse Svein Backer, 54, studies the nuances of the financial markets.** As the senior member of the investment team at a large corporate pension plan, he makes educated choices to optimize the financial futures of 350,000 people.

For Svein, little did he know that the future of his own health relied on a doctor's expert diagnosis that would ultimately lead to a lifesaving referral. "I've had acid reflux for at least 10 years and take medication for it," says Svein. He thought of heartburn

as simply inconvenient, but when he went in for a routine screening colonoscopy, he mentioned his issues with acid reflux. His gastroenterologist suggested that he also get a standard upper endoscopy and biopsies while under anesthesia. This would allow his doctor to take a look at his upper digestive tract—just to confirm his reflux was nothing more serious.

The endoscopy revealed a two-centimeter patch of suspicious tissue at the bottom of Svein's esophagus, *continued on page 6*



Photo by Bret Little/hailes

Svein Backer, 54, diagnosed with Barrett's esophagus, received an advanced procedure that got him quickly back to work as a financial powerhouse.



Photo by Silver Ridge Productions

Kathleen Norris, grandmother of eight and great-grandmother of two, became the 100th patient to receive proton therapy to safely treat her lung cancer. She and her husband, Ray, celebrated their 51st wedding anniversary in June.

## "This Treatment is so Advanced": Great-Grandmother is Grateful for Proton Therapy

BY JENNIFER DAVIS

**When Kathleen Norris was diagnosed with lung cancer in March, she went through several waves of emotion.** First came

extreme shock. She had gone to her local urgent care center thinking she might have bronchitis and was floored when an X-ray found a large mass on her left lung.

Next came fear, when she learned doctors could not operate to remove it. "I am a former smoker, and because of my severe emphysema, I was not a candidate for any kind of surgery to remove the tumor from my lung," Kathleen explains.

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## “I Only Had a Few Days to Live”: Lifesaving Liver Transplant BY SUSAN WALKER

**Lynly Boor was a healthy, busy entrepreneur, running her consulting business and enjoying an active lifestyle that included regular yoga classes.** The 55-year-old traveled to Los Angeles for work and noticed she wasn't feeling quite right. On the return flight, she felt worse and thought she must be coming down with something. Once home, however, her symptoms got much more severe very quickly.

“My stomach was very bloated, and I started retaining fluid, reaching 40 pounds of retained fluid very rapidly,” she explains. “I noticed the whites of my eyes were yellow.” Her primary care physician ran a battery of tests suspecting liver disease, but the tests were inconclusive. Lynly's symptoms continued to worsen quickly, and she contacted Rohit Satoskar, MD, medical director of Liver Transplantation at MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute. He arranged for Lynly's admission and an expedited workup for liver transplantation. A liver biopsy found that she was in acute liver failure, with 85 percent of her liver severely damaged. Although doctors could not pinpoint the cause of the damage, they suspected it may have been caused by herbal supplements Lynly was taking.

“I was put on the transplant waiting list, status 1A, which indicates that a patient has sudden, severe liver failure and only hours to days to live without a transplant,” she remembers.

Two days later, a compatible liver was found. Alexander Kroemer, MD, PhD, a Transplant Institute surgeon, immunologist, and scientific director of the Center for Translational Transplant Medicine at Georgetown University Medical Center, performed the transplant surgery.

**SHE CAME INTO THE HOSPITAL NEAR DEATH AND, 10 DAYS LATER, SHE WALKED OUT TO RETURN TO A HEALTHY, NORMAL LIFE.**

**ALEXANDER KROEMER, MD, PHD**

“Lynly's transplant surgery went very smoothly. The organ was of excellent quality, so it began working perfectly as soon as it was transplanted,” Dr. Kroemer says. “The benefit of receiving care from a center of excellence like the Transplant Institute is that our patients are evaluated and listed for transplant very quickly, before they become too sick. Our team has extensive expertise treating complex medical issues like Lynly's, which can have a positive impact on outcomes.”

Six months later, Lynly's health is back to normal, and she has returned to work. She was even able to travel to Paris.

“I went into this experience knowing nothing about liver transplants, but because of the MedStar Georgetown team—their compassion and the fact that they explained every step of the process and answered my questions—I felt safe and came from a place of comfort and belief rather than fear,” she says. “I wouldn't be here without MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute's team. They saved my life.”

Lynly Boor, an entrepreneur with her own consulting business, is grateful to get back to work, yoga, and travel after a successful liver transplant surgery from the team at MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute.

Photo by Gary Landsman

To find out if you may be a candidate for a liver transplant, visit [MedStarGeorgetown.org/LiverTrans](https://www.MedStarGeorgetown.org/LiverTrans) or call 202-295-0668 to make an appointment.



## Five Tips for Preventing Kidney Stones

BY ERIC GLASSER, MD, ASSOCIATE CHIEF OF SERVICE, EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT, MEDSTAR GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

We often see patients at the MedStar Georgetown University Hospital Emergency Department who are suffering from kidney stones. This condition is fairly common.

An estimated 1 in 10 Americans will develop kidney stones in their lifetime, and more than half a million people per year are hospitalized for related problems.

### Kidney Stones: An Overview

Kidney stones are small crystals that form when minerals and chemicals in urine bind together in the kidneys, forming “stones” that travel out of the body through the urinary system. If these stones become lodged in the urinary tract, a patient can experience severe pain. Also, if a patient develops an infection, this can become life-threatening. Most stones are less than 6 millimeters and will pass on their own. Some larger stones may require lithotripsy—a process of breaking up the stones by sound waves—or surgery to remove the stones.

### Symptoms of Kidney Stones

Symptoms that may require emergency medical care include severe pain in your back and sides, especially pain that comes in waves; pain that radiates anywhere from the flank to the groin and can be accompanied by vomiting or fever; blood in your urine; or difficulty urinating.

### Five Tips to Reduce Your Risk of Kidney Stones

For many people, kidney stones are, unfortunately, a recurring problem. Developing a single stone increases your risk of developing a second stone within seven years by about 50 percent. There are many factors that can contribute to elevated risk of kidney stones, including genetics,

a history of intestinal surgery, and certain kidney diseases—but diet and lifestyle play roles as well. So, here are our tips:

#### 1. Drink plenty of water

Keeping your body well hydrated has a wide range of physical benefits, including lowering your risk of developing kidney stones. The more water you consume, the more easily salts and minerals will flow through your kidneys, reducing opportunities for them to bind together and form stones.

#### 2. Seek citrus

Citric acid (citrate) is found in high concentration in lemons and can help prevent stones from forming. Increase your intake by adding fresh lemon juice to your water, but resist the urge to indulge in sugary lemonades.

#### 3. Be smart about salt

Salt increases the amount of calcium in your urine, which in turn increases your risk for kidney stones. A low-sodium diet can help prevent kidney stones, as well as lower your risk for other conditions, such as high blood pressure.

#### 4. Consider your food pairings

Many kidney stones are formed when calcium binds to a chemical called oxalate that is naturally found in foods such as rhubarb, spinach, beets, chocolate, sweet potatoes, and some nuts. Pairing oxalate-rich foods with calcium-rich foods (for instance, eating almonds along with some cheese) can allow the minerals to bind in your stomach and intestines before reaching the kidneys, decreasing your risk of developing stones. Talk with your doctor for specific guidance.

#### 5. Maintain a healthy body weight

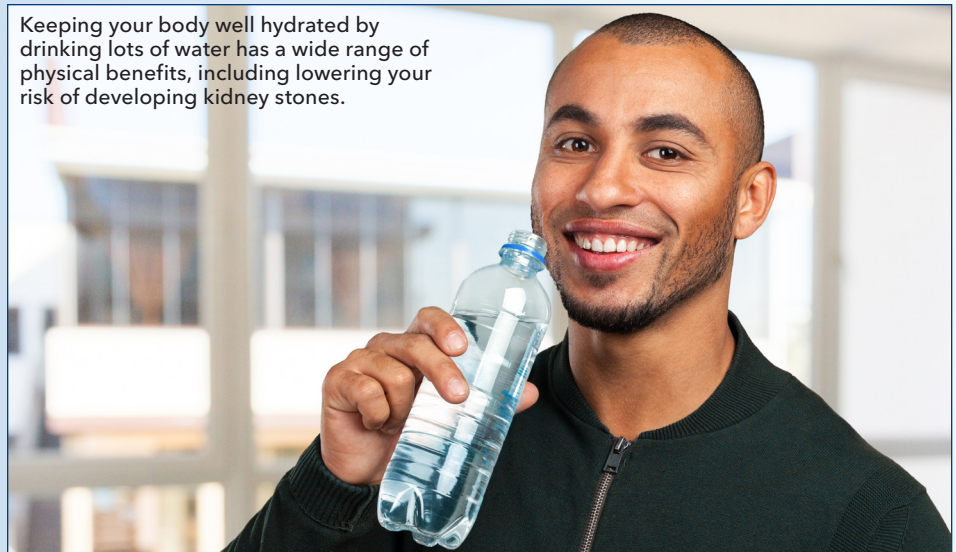
Achieving a healthy weight can help you avoid developing kidney stones, but it is important to get in shape safely. Very high-protein diets and rapid weight loss can actually increase your risk. Make a plan with your primary care provider for reaching a healthy weight in a healthy way.



Eric Glasser, MD, talks about avoiding kidney stones.

Visit [MedStarGeorgetown.org/ED](https://www.MedStarGeorgetown.org/ED) for more information about the services available at our Emergency Department.

Keeping your body well hydrated by drinking lots of water has a wide range of physical benefits, including lowering your risk of developing kidney stones.



## Philanthropic Gifts Support Pavilion Campaign: Giving Back with Gratitude BY EMILY TURK

**Jeff and Joan Ferrill feel twice blessed.** An emergency procedure at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital saved Jeff's life. Ongoing care has given him back his quality of life.

In 2012, Jeff arrived at the Hospital's Emergency Department (ED) delirious and in excruciating pain. His condition was critical. Diagnostic testing revealed the problem: a rare and often fatal gastric volvulus. Jeff's stomach was tightly twisted in a knot, preventing food—and blood—from moving through.

### Rare Condition, Cutting-Edge Care

In most hospitals, treatment for gastric volvulus would mean major surgery to cut out the obstructed area and connect the esophagus to the small bowel. Fortunately for Jeff, MedStar Georgetown is one of just a few hospitals that offer an advanced, less invasive procedure.

**WE WANT TO SUPPORT THE DOCTORS WHO PROVIDE SUCH EXCELLENT PATIENT CARE, AND TO BE ABLE TO SEE THE IMPACT OF OUR GIFTS IS REWARDING.**

JOAN FERRILL

"Dr. Patrick Jackson is one of a handful of surgeons who perform this operation," Jeff explains. "That's the kind of excellence I've come to expect from a teaching hospital like MedStar Georgetown."

Treatment required the skills of a multidisciplinary team including Surgeon Patrick Jackson, MD; Gastroenterologist Nadim Haddad, MD; Otolaryngologist Bruce Davidson, MD; and Surgeon Parag Bhanot, MD. Jeff had a hernia through his diaphragm and a portion of his stomach had died. Dr. Jackson used minimally invasive techniques to remove the dead portion of his stomach and reconnected the esophagus and stomach.



Photo courtesy of Joan Ferrill

The Ferrills were presented with a gift in appreciation of their generous philanthropic contributions to MedStar Georgetown University Hospital and to the Medical/Surgical Pavilion. From left, Gastroenterologist Nadim Haddad, MD, Joan and Jeff Ferrill, and Surgeon Patrick Jackson, MD.

To help this heal correctly, Jeff needed a multidisciplinary team of physicians, led by Dr. Haddad, to make sure the esophagus and stomach could function normally. Jeff says, "I couldn't eat solid foods for a long time. Today, I'm able to eat small meals frequently during the day and feel normal again."

### Blessings to Give

Very satisfied with the result of their care, Jeff and Joan could have easily walked away with a simple thank you. But they chose another path. Jeff recalls, "I went to each physician and asked them, 'What can we do? What do you really need in your department?'" To express their profound gratitude, the Ferrills made a generous philanthropic commitment to be divided among the departments for use in providing continuous quality care.

Soon after, the Ferrills learned of the Hospital's ambitious project to build a 477,000-square-foot Medical/Surgical Pavilion with a new ED, 32 operating rooms, three patient floors, and a rooftop helipad.

"We both realized that the top doctors and the best technology need a world-class facility," says Jeff. So the Ferrills made another very generous philanthropic commitment

to name a Family Lounge and help make the Pavilion a reality. Joan explains, "I know from experience that waiting for news about loved ones is very stressful for families. They need a comfortable place to spend hours—often days—waiting."

Now, the Ferrills have increased their generosity with an additional commitment to the Pavilion campaign, as well as a gift to renovate the current ED. "We are so grateful to Joan and Jeff Ferrill for their generous philanthropic partnership," says Michael Sachtleben, president of MedStar Georgetown. "Their gifts, including support for the new Medical/Surgical Pavilion, given in gratitude for the care they received, will have a real and lasting impact for our patients, caregivers, and the communities we serve for generations to come."

"Joan and I feel that we are part of the hospital family and just love MedStar Georgetown," Jeff says. "It's like the old saying, 'Of those to whom much is given, much is expected.'" For the Ferrills, this means giving back to the hospital they truly respect. "We feel blessed to be able to do it," Joan adds.

To learn more about how you can partner with us, visit [MedStarGeorgetown.org/NewBuilding](https://www.MedStarGeorgetown.org/NewBuilding) or call 202-444-0721.

## All Smiles: Facial and Jaw Surgery Changes a Life BY JENNIFER DAVIS

**Kadiatu Conteh has known Stephen B. Baker, MD, director of the Center for Facial Restoration at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, for more than half her life.** She says he not only transformed her face, but also her life, for the better.

“Dr. Baker changed everything,” she says.

Kadiatu first met Dr. Baker at the age of 16, when multiple other doctors had told her the very large tumor growing on the side of her face was inoperable. It was benign, but it was growing aggressively, increasingly pushing into blood vessels. She was losing blood, which required repeated emergency hospital visits.

Kadiatu, who was born and raised in Sierra Leone, in West Africa, says she had lost hope that anything could be done until Dr. Baker told her he believed he could treat her safely and remove the tumor. More than a decade ago, he did just that—without damaging her brain, removing her jaw, or removing all her teeth, risks other doctors had identified. He was also able to reconstruct her face to have as normal an appearance as possible.

“The surgery changed how I felt about myself, and it changed how other people looked at me,” Kadiatu says. “I tell everyone that Dr. Baker is my hero.”

Eighteen years later, the tumor hadn’t recurred, but Kadiatu sought out Dr. Baker for a follow-up procedure because the original tumor had pushed her jaw to the left side of her face. She wanted Dr. Baker’s help to complete her facial repair.

So, in a second surgery in 2018, Dr. Baker centralized Kadiatu’s jaw and leveled it out. To perform the procedure, he and his MedStar Georgetown team



At age 16, Kadiatu Conteh received life-changing surgery to remove a benign tumor, thanks to Stephen B. Baker, MD, director of the Center for Facial Restoration at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital.

Photo by Silver Ridge Productions

used a new technology: taking a CT scan (a 3D digital X-ray) of Kadiatu’s jaw and performing the entire procedure on a computer before entering the operating room. This process ensured the most accurate results possible.

“The second surgery straightened my lip and mouth. It made an incredible difference,” Kadiatu says. “I really appreciate what Dr. Baker was able to do. He did a wonderful job.”

While her case is a rare and extremely complicated one, Dr. Baker says it does showcase the quality of care that can be provided at MedStar Georgetown’s Center for Facial Restoration. The team is experienced

in jaw and chin surgery, tumor removal, nose surgery, skin cancer procedures, and more.

“We have multiple experts to offer patients the best possible care and optimize the facial form of somebody who has had an injury, a tumor, or was born with an anomaly,” he explains. “With advances in maxillofacial surgery, we have the tools to come very close to restoring the patient to a normal face.”

That’s been the case for Kadiatu, who is tumor-free and now able to pursue a career as a nursing assistant. She says her latest surgery made it possible for her to smile at her patients.

“I know how much people helped me when I was in the hospital, and I like being able to help others when they are going through something themselves. I feel happy and so much more comfortable smiling at my patients now, which is so important,” Kadiatu says. “Dr. Baker, my lifesaver, made this possible.”

If you would like to learn more about facial reconstruction surgery, visit [MedStarGeorgetown.org/FacialSurgery](https://www.MedStarGeorgetown.org/FacialSurgery) or call 202-444-8751 to make an appointment.

Kadiatu Conteh and Stephen B. Baker, MD, discuss the success of her second surgery in 2018 to complete her facial repair by centralizing her jaw and leveling it out.

Photo by Silver Ridge Productions



## Routine Screening, Lifesaving Referral, and Advanced Procedure Prevent Esophageal Cancer *continued from page 1*

a discovery which prompted a referral to John Carroll, MD, a gastroenterologist at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital who specializes in esophageal diseases. Dr. Carroll would ultimately perform a procedure that would save Svein's life.

### Warning Signs

Dr. Carroll diagnosed Svein with Barrett's esophagus, a premalignant condition that occurs in roughly 15 percent of people with chronic acid reflux symptoms. Barrett's esophagus is the result of regurgitation of acid from the stomach that damages the lining of the esophagus. "Left untreated, Barrett's may lead to esophageal cancer," explains Dr. Carroll. "We don't know which patients with acid reflux will develop Barrett's esophagus, although it's more common in men. Our best option is

**DR. CARROLL AND THE MEDSTAR GEORGETOWN TEAM TOOK GREAT CARE OF ME, AND I GOT RIGHT BACK ON MY PROFESSIONAL BATTLEFIELD.**

**SVEIN BACKER**

to screen all patients with reflux to ensure that it doesn't lead to cancer."

The results of the endoscopy and biopsies confirmed that Svein's lesion was precancerous—a high-grade dysplasia that required treatment. Just 10 years ago, treatment would have meant a major surgery to remove part or all of the esophagus. But Svein was able to benefit from an advanced therapy called radiofrequency ablation. Dr. Carroll was among the first gastroenterologists in the region to perform the procedure, and since

then, MedStar Georgetown has performed more ablation procedures than any other area hospital.

### Advanced Techniques, Experienced Team

During radiofrequency ablation, a thin tube called an endoscope is used to deliver energy that burns away precancerous tissue. Another ablation procedure, called cryotherapy, uses an endoscope to deliver extreme cold that freezes away tissue. Dr. Carroll and his team choose the option that is best for a particular patient—in Svein's case, radiofrequency ablation. Both procedures take about 30 minutes and allow patients to go home the same day.

Svein left his procedure feeling fine, except for a sore throat that went away after a few days. He was back to work soon after. Today, he is feeling as good as new.

"I believe that when things are important, you don't want to settle for second-best," he says. "I had the most experienced and successful people on my side. Dr. Carroll and the MedStar Georgetown team took great care of me, and I got right back on my professional battlefield."

If you are experiencing chronic acid reflux or other similar GI symptoms, visit [MedStarGeorgetown.org/Barretts](https://www.MedStarGeorgetown.org/Barretts) or call **202-444-8541**.

Because of the advanced technology of radiofrequency ablation procedures at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, Svein Backer is feeling as good as new and he can get back to what he loves: biking.

Photo by Bret Littlehales



## “This Treatment is so Advanced”: Great-Grandmother is Grateful for Proton Therapy

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But the 72-year-old says, amazingly, the next emotion she felt was relief. Because after her local hospital transferred her to MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, Jonathan W. Lischalk, MD, in MedStar Georgetown’s Department of Radiation Medicine, told her she was a great candidate for proton therapy.

**WITH PROTON THERAPY, I WAS ABLE TO PROTECT KATHLEEN’S HEART AND LUNGS FROM EXCESS RADIATION.**

JONATHAN W. LISCHALK, MD

This Southern Maryland mother of three, grandmother of eight, and great-grandmother of two—with one more on the way—became the 100th patient to receive this next generation of radiation therapy at MedStar Georgetown’s Proton Therapy Center.

Proton therapy is a highly advanced and effective form of radiation therapy that can treat tumors anywhere in the body, in adults and children. More precise than traditional radiation treatments, proton therapy targets tumors with high-dose radiation and molds to the tumor’s exact size and shape, leaving no exit dose. This pinpoint accuracy reduces damage to surrounding healthy tissue and also reduces patient exposure to radiation by up to 50 percent while still delivering curative doses of radiation.

“With proton therapy, I was able to protect Kathleen’s heart and lungs from excess radiation and effectively offer a curative treatment, safely, with minimal side effects,” Dr. Lischalk says.

MedStar Georgetown is the only facility in the Washington, D.C.,

Kathleen Norris with Jonathan W. Lischalk, MD, who gave her proton therapy treatment at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital.

Photo courtesy of Jenna Chaney

metropolitan area to offer proton therapy with HYPERSCAN™.

Kathleen received proton therapy five days a week for six weeks along with chemotherapy once a week. The experience was far superior to what her granddaughter went through when she was diagnosed with cancer at the age of two. That was a decade ago.

“I wish my granddaughter could have had this treatment 10 years ago,” she says.

“I keep thinking, what if my doctor had not made a few calls to get me to MedStar Georgetown? What would have happened then?” Kathleen says. “I’m just so relieved that I did get here. The goal now is to survive this. I have had a good life and hopefully it will continue for a long time.”

Kathleen says she is grateful for all the support she has had from friends and family. She is now very hopeful as she looks to the future.



### Meet Jonathan Lischalk, MD

Visit [MedStarGeorgetown.org/LischalkVideo](https://www.MedStarGeorgetown.org/LischalkVideo) to learn more about how proton therapy works.

For more information on the benefits of proton therapy, visit us at [MedStarGeorgetown.org/ProtonAdvanced](https://www.MedStarGeorgetown.org/ProtonAdvanced) or call 202-444-4639.



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## National Cancer Institute Renews Prestigious Designation of Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center

MedStar Georgetown University Hospital is proud to announce that the National Cancer Institute (NCI) has once again designated its research partner, Georgetown Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center, with its coveted distinction, "comprehensive cancer center." Of the 1,500 cancer programs in the United States, **only 51 have this prestigious designation and Georgetown Lombardi is the only such center in the Washington, D.C., area.**

This long-standing partnership provides patients with unparalleled access to physician teams who are offering breakthrough advancements in diagnostics, clinical trials, new technologies, and novel therapeutics. "At our hospital, you're going to be treated like a person, not like a disease," says Dr. Louis M. Weiner, director of Georgetown Lombardi and MedStar Georgetown Cancer Institute.

Our cancer specialists provide a personalized treatment plan which often translates into better care with improved outcomes.

If you or someone you love has been diagnosed with cancer, visit [MedStarGeorgetown.org/NCI](http://MedStarGeorgetown.org/NCI) or call **202-444-2223**.

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