



# MedStar Georgetown MD

## Living with vigor after CyberKnife® prostate cancer treatment. By Karen Hansen



**After being diagnosed with prostate cancer, Tony Englert researched his treatment options thoroughly and decided CyberKnife at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital was the right treatment for him. He couldn't be happier with the results.** Photo by Hilary Schwab Photography

"Mr. Englert, you have cancer." In 2015, Tony Englert was stunned to hear "the words you don't expect to hear in your lifetime." After all, Tony was 67, healthy, an avid runner and golfer, and still managing a high-profile executive career. Most important, Tony had not experienced any prostate cancer symptoms, such as urinary retention or bone pain.

Many men with prostate cancer never notice symptoms at all. For Tony, the red flags were slightly elevated PSA (prostate-specific antigen) levels detected over a few years during his routine annual physicals. Tony underwent a biopsy at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, and it confirmed intermediate-grade

cancer. Upon receiving the news, Tony decided he "didn't want to sit around the house that day." So, he went to the gym. "It took me two days to say that I had CANCER," he says.

Afterward, Tony plunged into research with his characteristic energy. His cancer had not spread and was treatable. It was a question of choosing the right treatment option. He reached out to other prostate patients and reviewed countless articles.

In his consults with physicians all over the country, Tony kept coming back to Sean Collins, MD, director of the CyberKnife® Prostate program at MedStar Georgetown.

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## Thumb surgery helps concert pianist play without pain. By Susan Walker

Ever since she was four years old, Loudoun County, Virginia, resident Lisa Emenheiser's life has revolved around playing the piano. Today, she's an accomplished Steinway Artist known for the intensity and passion of her performances. She regularly performs with the National Symphony Orchestra, as well as the 21st Century Consort and other chamber music groups. She also teaches piano at her home studio to a select group of students.

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**After her surgery, Lisa Emenheiser is back to playing complicated pieces with her trademark passion and without pain.**

Photo by Silver Ridge Productions

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# After a combined kidney and pancreas transplant, life is good for Kevin White.

By Susan Walker

Kevin White knew the day he'd need a kidney transplant was coming. Over the past few decades, high blood pressure had damaged his kidneys. He was on dialysis, and his kidneys were only functioning at 10%. He was also diabetic. His father had undergone a kidney transplant in the 1970s, and his brother is currently on the waiting list for a kidney transplant.

What did surprise Kevin, a 61-year-old former FBI agent and now a government contractor, was when Peter Abrams, MD, a pancreas transplant surgeon at MedStar Georgetown Transplant Institute, recommended he have a combined kidney/pancreas transplant.

"Dr. Abrams said that when you have diabetes and just get a kidney transplant, the immunosuppression drugs you take after the transplant often make your diabetes more difficult to manage, so a combined transplant was the best approach. And getting a kidney and pancreas transplant at the same time would mean a much shorter time on the waiting list," he explains.

**"It's like night and day, like I was born again."**

—Kevin White

Adds Dr. Abrams, "A combined transplant is the quickest way off dialysis. Typical wait times for a kidney transplant can be five years or more, while the wait time for a combined kidney/pancreas transplant is frequently around six months."

The new pancreas cures the diabetes, so patients no longer need insulin and other medications. And the new kidney means they no longer need dialysis. The end result is a significantly higher quality of life.

After completing the transplant evaluation process, Kevin was placed



**After his kidney/pancreas transplant, Kevin White no longer has to spend time on dialysis. Instead, he is enjoying planning his wedding, DJing on weekends, and spending time with his fiancée.** Photo by C. King Media

on the waiting list. In less than a year, he had his transplant, and his life was transformed.

"It's like night and day, like I was born again," Kevin says. "I used to get dizzy walking from the Metro to work and had to constantly watch my blood sugar levels. I'm a fiercely independent person, and now it feels great that I can work on my house or mow the grass without stopping to drink glucose to keep my blood sugar on an even keel." Another benefit for Kevin is he is no longer on dialysis. Often, a person with end-stage kidney disease can spend up to 12 hours a week on dialysis. "Before my transplant, I adapted to having to spend time in dialysis and time recuperating after dialysis. But I'm so happy to have that time back," says Kevin.

Now that he's had his COVID-19 vaccines and booster, Kevin is putting that time to good use, planning his wedding, DJing on the weekends, going out to eat, enjoying live music, and planning trips he and his fiancée want to take after the pandemic.

Kevin also has some helpful advice for others who need a transplant.

"Be your own advocate and ask questions. Know all the members of your medical team," he says. "Get your infrastructure in place so you're ready when an organ is available. Think about finances, disability leave at work, and who can help you with chores during your recovery. Create your at-home support team as soon as you complete your evaluation and you'll be well prepared when you have your transplant."



**Meet Peter Abrams, MD**  
Visit [MedStarHealth.org/Abrams](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Abrams) to watch Dr. Abrams discuss kidney/pancreas transplantation.

Visit [MedStarHealth.org/Transplant](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Transplant) to learn more about kidney/pancreas transplants. To schedule an appointment with one of our specialists, call **202-444-3701**.

# Tips for ramping up your health and well-being.

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



**Winter soups full of vegetables and spices are a great way to get the vitamins and minerals your body needs.**

The winter is a natural time to look inward, take stock, and readjust those areas of our lives that may not be working as well as we would like. This year it feels especially important. Over the past months, many of us found ourselves eating and drinking more, moving less, and experiencing higher stress levels. This lifestyle can have serious health ramifications, and we have seen some of that in the emergency department.

If you have noticed an adverse change in your health, the good news is that it's not too late to get your health and sense of well-being back on track—or simply take them to the next level. Here are some ways to help you nurture your health, increase your energy, and improve your sense of well-being.

**Check in with a checkup.** If you haven't already, head off any serious illness by contacting your primary care provider to schedule your regular checkup and screenings, such as a mammogram or eye exam. Stay updated on your vaccinations and remember to get your flu shot.

**Get moving.** Start gentle stretching in the morning and evening, take regular walks, join a local gym or community fitness classes, and find ways to move more throughout your day. Getting more exercise can help you manage your weight, ease stress and depression, relieve pain, and encourage healthy eating.

**Eat a colorful diet.** Try to make at least half of each meal consist of colorful vegetables and fruits. With the weather getting colder, now is the perfect time to get creative making soups, stews, or chilis—and load them up with vegetables and spices. This makes the process of eating a diverse diet more manageable and more fun.

**Make sleep a priority.** Set a regular schedule for sleeping and waking hours to help your body maintain a consistent rhythm. A consistent schedule will support your mental and physical health. Plus, sleep is crucial for our bodies to rejuvenate and heal. Everyone does better with a good night's sleep.

## Tame your stress.

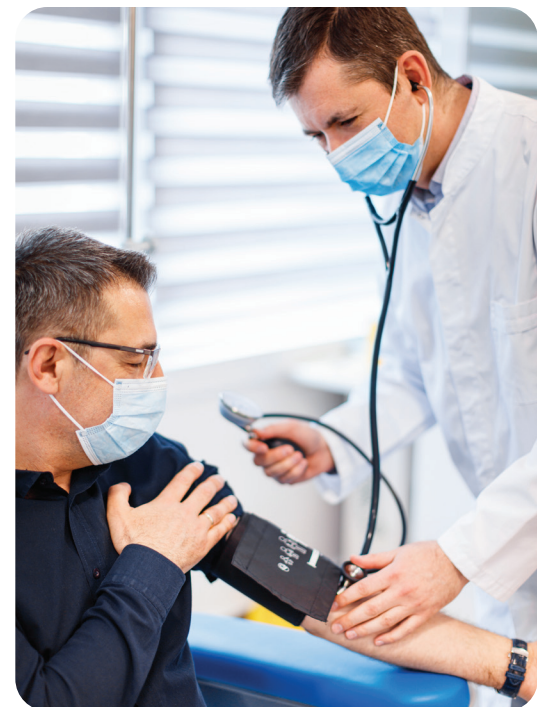
Stress can do a number on our health—physical and mental. Each day, try to take time for quiet meditation or slow breathing. Gentle yoga and tai chi are mindful moving meditations that can help lower blood pressure and reduce levels of stress hormones. Several apps provide guided meditation and visualizations. Find one that works for you.



**Kerri Layman, MD**

**Find your joy.** Try something you always wanted to do; return to a hobby you used to love. Whether snuggling up with a good book or getting together with friends, make time in your life for the things that bring you joy. Happiness is good for your heart; it can strengthen your immune system and combats stress.

Most importantly, don't be hard on yourself. Taking your lifestyle to a healthier level may take some time. Try incorporating small changes each day. And remember, we are here to support you.



**Head off any serious illness by scheduling your regular checkup and screenings.**

# Advances in pediatric cancer care give a young girl her childhood back.

By Jennifer Davis



**Myla Ashton (left) and Denise Ashton (center) are grateful for the care Myla received at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital. The whole family is happy that Myla is back to her regular life, including game night.** Photo by Hilary Schwab Photography

When Denise Ashton's daughter, Myla, began experiencing intense fatigue and leg pain, the Hollywood, Maryland, mom took her first grader to see their pediatrician, who's part of MedStar Georgetown Pediatrics. Blood work led to a diagnosis of leukemia within 24 hours, and Myla was immediately referred to the Division of Pediatric, Adolescent, and Young Adult Hematology and Oncology at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital.

**"At MedStar Georgetown, they made sure we knew what the whole journey would entail...and how to take it one phase at a time."**

—Denise Ashton

This would be a frightening situation for any mom, but Denise had been diagnosed with leukemia as a child, and she knew the pain and challenges that lay ahead for Myla.

"It was overwhelming because I had been through it," Denise says. "I remember thinking—we're going to beat this, but I didn't want her to live through all the pain that I had. I quickly discovered, goodness gracious, mountains have been moved since I got my treatment in terms of how it is handled now."

Myla says needles were the hardest part of what came next, but Denise says getting a port or central line reduced the pain considerably compared to her own experience.

"When I was sick, I remember feeling in the dark all the time," says Denise. "It was all so scary. But at MedStar Georgetown, they always made sure we knew up front what the whole journey would entail from start to finish and how to take it one phase at a time. Understanding that Myla's world felt out of control, they gave her control whenever they could. I think that gave her the courage to get through it and learn to be her own advocate. They did such a fabulous job at MedStar Georgetown."

"Of course, we focus on supporting our patients' clinical needs, but we are just as committed to focusing on their emotional needs," explains Jeffrey Toretzky, MD, division chief of Pediatric, Adolescent, and Young Adult Hematology and Oncology at MedStar Georgetown. "In addition to providing state-of-the-art, multidisciplinary treatment, we also incorporate the most developmentally appropriate ways of working with patients from birth through young adulthood. Whether that's providing integrative services

like yoga and acupuncture, supporting families of babies, or empowering children to be self-advocates—we want our patients and their families to know we are walking this journey with them."

Dr. Toretzky and Susmita Sarangi, MD, a pediatric hematologist/oncologist at MedStar Georgetown, treated Myla with an intense chemotherapy regimen for nine months. This was followed by two years of maintenance therapy, which included daily oral medication and five days of chemotherapy every month.

Dr. Sarangi reports that having completed her chemotherapy in August of 2020, Myla is no longer immunocompromised, and her prognosis is excellent.

Myla is back in school, participates in competitive dance, and likes spending time with her older siblings.

She also has advice for any other children diagnosed: "Take your pills in ice cream—it makes them go down easier. And never give up," she says.



**During her cancer treatment, the staff found ways to help Myla Ashton feel empowered and encouraged her to be her own advocate.** Photo by Hilary Schwab Photography

Visit [MedStarHealth.org/PAYA](https://www.medstarhealth.org/PAYA) to learn more about our Pediatric, Adolescent, and Young Adult Hematology and Oncology services. To make an appointment with one of our specialists, call **202-444-7599**.

# Historic \$50 million philanthropic gift to support new Medical/Surgical Pavilion.

Expands existing commitment to advancing whole person health care By Jennifer Davis

Grant Verstandig developed a deep personal commitment to advancing healthcare systems after his own experience as a patient with a knee injury that required 16 surgeries and from observing several family members and friends navigate through numerous healthcare experiences. These care experiences ignited a determination to help make health care easier and more accessible for everyone.

**“With its state-of-the-art capabilities, the Medical/Surgical Pavilion will completely transform healthcare options in the region.”**

–Grant Verstandig

Now, the 32-year-old entrepreneur, venture capital investor, technology advisor, and philanthropist is doing just that. Grant and the Verstandig Family Foundation are donating a transformational \$50 million gift to support the MedStar Georgetown University Hospital Medical/Surgical Pavilion, which is currently under construction and expected to open in 2023. Grant’s gift is one of the largest philanthropic gifts ever made to health care in the Washington, D.C., region and will support one of the most significant healthcare projects to take place in the region.

“This generous gift is a wonderful expression of gratitude to our hospital and to all of our amazing healthcare workers who have been working tirelessly throughout the pandemic,” says Mike Sachtleben, senior vice president and COO, Washington Region, MedStar Health, and president of MedStar Georgetown. “We appreciate Mr. Verstandig’s dedication and commitment to health care by helping us build our pavilion so we can continue to provide world-class care for our patients.”

The Medical/Surgical Pavilion will consist of 477,213 square feet featuring 156 private patient rooms, a rooftop helipad with direct access to 31 state-of-the-art operating rooms, and a modernized emergency department with 32 private rooms. It will feature the latest technology for robotic surgeries and innovative spaces for teaching and research to foster growth and training in the specialty services for complex diseases, including oncology, gastroenterology, neurology, neurosurgery, orthopaedics, and transplant. It will also include a three-story underground parking garage.

“With its state-of-the-art capabilities, the Medical/Surgical Pavilion will completely transform healthcare options in the region, bringing

for making this naming gift to the MedStar Georgetown University Medical/Surgical Pavilion,” says Kenneth A. Samet, president and CEO of MedStar Health. “Grant is a true visionary, and his commitment to the health and well-being of patients in our region is highly impactful. I believe Grant’s leadership gift will inspire others to join him in partnering with us as we build a world-class facility to support the world-class care we provide.”

The new facility will also be a place that serves to reinforce the spirit of *cura personalis*, care of the whole person, which complements Grant’s passion for caring about patients’ mental and spiritual well-being in addition to their physical health.



**Slated to open in 2023, the Medical/Surgical Pavilion will accelerate the region’s healthcare capabilities, providing 31 state-of-the-art operating rooms and a modernized emergency department with 32 private rooms.**

unparalleled patient care and advanced technology to the area,” Grant says. “I am pleased to offer my gratitude by supporting this campaign and investing through philanthropy in the incredible work being done by the amazing care teams at MedStar Georgetown.”

“We are incredibly grateful to Grant Verstandig for his generous support of MedStar Health and, in particular,

“I believe in the positive and profound impact that innovation and technology can have on medical facilities and treatments, and I am proud to support the development of MedStar Georgetown University Hospital’s Medical/Surgical Pavilion that will impact people for generations to come,” Grant says.

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

## Thumb surgery helps concert pianist play without pain. *continued from page 1*



**Lisa Emenheiser, watching a recording of one of her concerts with her husband, Boyd Sarratt, says she could not be more thrilled with the outcome of her surgery.** Photo by Silver Ridge Productions

"Music is my life," Lisa says. "So, when I started feeling moderate pain in my right thumb about five years ago, although I could still play well, I was concerned about whether it would affect my ability to play in the future." Lisa went to see Michael Kessler, MD, chief, Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, Division of Hand Surgery of the MedStar Orthopaedic Institute at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital. He diagnosed her with moderate arthritis and treated her thumb with cortisone injections, which kept the pain at bay for the past five years.

**"I'm grateful to the whole MedStar Health team. I can play again. A big part of my life has been restored."**

—Lisa Emenheiser

But that changed this past year. The pandemic had paused live music performances, so Lisa wasn't playing as frequently. When venues began to open again, and she started more

intense practicing, she ran into a big problem—playing caused severe pain and limited her use of her thumb. "I couldn't even play a scale because I couldn't turn my thumb under without pain, which also ran up my arm," she explains.

Lisa quickly scheduled an appointment with Dr. Kessler. X-rays showed that the arthritis in her thumb had progressed a great deal, with her bones scraping against each other. "If you want to continue to play professionally," he told her, "you'll need to have surgery to repair the joint."

The procedure he recommended was called thumb basal joint arthroplasty with abductor pollicis longus suspensionplasty. "During the operation, I removed a small bone in the wrist and harvested 25% of the abductor pollicis longus tendon, which I reconfigured to make the thumb work properly," he explains.

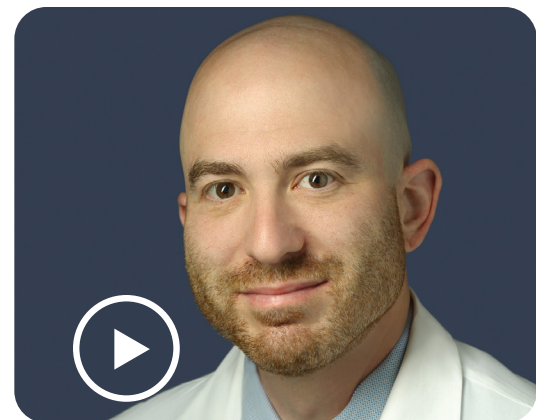
Before the surgery, Lisa asked Dr. Kessler to watch a particular video of her playing Rachmaninoff so he could see the force and precision

she'd need to be able to continue to play as she had throughout her career. She also showed him the span of her hand and explained how important it was to keep the same span post-surgery.

"I was impressed that he took my request seriously," says Lisa. "He understood that these things were essential for a professional musician. And he was confident he could fix my problem. That made me feel confident too."

She started playing simple pieces a month after her surgery, and with the help of Lenora Brasher, MedStar National Rehabilitation Network physical therapist, her hand grew stronger and more flexible with each passing week. Three months after her surgery, Lisa was back to playing complicated pieces with her trademark passion and no pain.

"I'm glad I chose Dr. Kessler and made the decision to have surgery. I'm grateful to the whole MedStar Health team and couldn't be more thrilled with the outcome. I can play again. A big part of my life has been restored."



**Meet Michael Kessler, MD**

Visit [MedStarHealth.org/Kessler](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Kessler) to watch Dr. Kessler discuss hand surgery.

Visit [MedStarHealth.org/Hands](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/Hands) to learn more about hand surgery. To schedule an appointment with one of our specialists, call **202-295-0549**.

# Living with vigor after CyberKnife® prostate cancer treatment.

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With CyberKnife, there is no going under the knife at all. "CyberKnife is an external radiation device that targets cancer cells with high doses of radiation, with a surgical precision that protects surrounding healthy tissue," says Dr. Collins. "CyberKnife has a real-time tracking system that provides updated prostate positioning and corrects the targeting of the radiation beam during treatment, so you have sub-millimeter accuracy."

The biggest advantages for Tony were convenience, increased chance of cure, and the lower likelihood of significant side effects. "CyberKnife is painless, and there is virtually no recovery time. Most patients need just five treatments, versus the 40 required with conventional radiation," Dr. Collins explains.

"I thought Mr. Englert was a great candidate for CyberKnife," Dr. Collins says. "I didn't think conventionally



Since his CyberKnife procedure, Tony Englert is back enjoying life, including a recent trip to Mount Rushmore. Photo by Deb Englert

fractionated intensity-modulated radiation therapy (IMRT) was adequate to control his cancer for his long life expectancy. I wanted to give him the best chance, with the most accurate high-dose radiation, to control his cancer for the rest of his life."

CyberKnife requires a team approach. Dr. Collins works closely with MedStar Georgetown Urology, Radiology, Medical Oncology, and Radiation Oncology teams. "We tag team it," he says. "We've been treating prostate cancer with the CyberKnife for 15 years. We've treated 1,900 patients, and we follow all of them. We've learned from every single one of those 1,900 patients how to improve our outcomes. Because of that approach, I now think we are the best prostate CyberKnife program in the world."

Approximately two weeks prior to treatment, John Lynch, MD, a urologist and former chair of the Urology department at MedStar Georgetown performed a critical step in the CyberKnife process. He implanted four tiny gold pellets, or markers, into Tony's prostate. CyberKnife uses these markers to track the tumor.


On the first day of treatment, Tony was apprehensive. "The unknown, you know? But it was so nothing," he says. During the second treatment, Tony listened to his favorite Wynton Marsalis CD. "By the fourth or fifth treatment, I was about to take a nap!"

Adding to Tony's comfort was the support of his MedStar Georgetown team. "They were not only pleasant, but qualified. They made you feel welcomed—like old friends. As great as Dr. Collins is—he saved my life!—the techs were outstanding." On his last day of treatment, Tony gave each member a personal note and a gift. He still stops by occasionally to say hello. About Dr. Collins, he says, "he cares, and it shows. And I've worked with a lot of physicians."

After treatment, Tony's first PSA results were better than expected: Seven years later, his PSA remains low, and he maintains his active lifestyle. "I recommend anyone diagnosed with prostate cancer to seriously consider CyberKnife at MedStar Georgetown," Tony says. "I mean, why wouldn't you?"

## CyberKnife® for prostate cancer.

 **5 vs. 40 treatments** compared to traditional radiation

 **More accurate and convenient:**  
Targeted radiation with minimal damage to healthy tissue

 **Virtually no pain**

 **Quick recovery times:**

Get back to your normal life quickly

 **Minimal side effects**

 **15 years** of experience

 **1st**  
East Coast center to adopt CyberKnife

**1,900** patients treated 



**Meet Sean Collins, MD**  
Visit [MedStarHealth.org/Collins](http://MedStarHealth.org/Collins) to watch Dr. Collins discuss CyberKnife for treating prostate cancer.

Visit [MedStarHealth.org/CK](http://MedStarHealth.org/CK) to learn more about CyberKnife treatment for prostate cancer. To schedule an appointment with one of our specialists, call **202-444-4639**.

# MedStar GeorgetownMD

A MedStar Georgetown University Hospital publication

## Congratulations to the Blood and Marrow Collection program—recipient of the 2021 *Be There Award*.

Each year, thousands of people of all ages are diagnosed with blood cancers or other life-threatening conditions of the blood like leukemia, lymphoma, or sickle cell anemia. Receiving a stem cell transplant from a generous matching donor can be the difference between life and death.



The National Marrow Donor Program® (NMDP)/Be The Match® connects patients with their donor match for a life-saving marrow or umbilical cord blood transplant. This year, the organization's *Be There Award* honors the Blood and Marrow Collection program at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital, recognizing the program's exceptional work during the pandemic to increase its capacity to help more patients.

"We all understood that cancer does not stop for COVID-19," explains Wolfgang Rennert, PhD, MD, medical director of the Blood and Marrow Collection program. "We are grateful for the support to expand our program at this critical time, and even more grateful to the donors who give of themselves to help save another's life."

Visit [MedStarHealth.org/BeThere](https://www.MedStarHealth.org/BeThere) to learn more about this life-saving program.

*MedStarGeorgetownMD*, published quarterly, shares the latest health news with our community. To start or stop receiving this newsletter, please call **202-444-6815** or email [torneyd@gunet.georgetown.edu](mailto:torneyd@gunet.georgetown.edu).

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