

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL

# senior advantage

SUMMER 2016

## TOTAL JOINT *replacement*

The orthopaedic surgery  
that's changing lives

### INSIDE:

Comprehensive  
stroke care at  
GW Hospital

.....

Moving on  
after cancer



THE GEORGE WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY **HOSPITAL**



## DEFINING MEDICINE

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## From the *CEO*

It is my pleasure to introduce myself as the new Chief Executive Officer at the George Washington University Hospital. I have had the privilege of working at GW Hospital since 1997, when I started my career at the bedside as a speech-language pathologist. We continue to define medicine through our collaboration with the GW School of Medicine and Health Sciences and The GW Medical Faculty Associates.

With our Senior Advantage program at GW Hospital, we recognize that seniors have unique needs and interests regarding their healthcare. Please know we are committed to support, guide and provide you with the highest quality care and service. In this issue, you will read about exciting developments, including our achievements in stroke care, as well as the expansion of the GW Cancer Center and our cancer survivorship clinic.

Thank you, again, for being a member of Senior Advantage at GW Hospital. I look forward to continuing to partner with you in your health.

**Kimberly Russo**  
Chief Executive Officer

## GW HOSPITAL *welcomes new residents!*

One of the ways that GW Hospital *defines medicine* is through its status as an academic medical center training the physicians of the future.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- GW Hospital has **108 residents**
- Of those 108 residents, **16 studied at international medical schools**, and **92 studied at US medical schools**
- Of our 92 residents from US schools, **9 studied at The George Washington School of Medicine and Health Science** – that's more than 8 percent!





# THE ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERY THAT'S *changing lives*



**Joint replacement surgery is helping many seniors achieve long-lasting relief from joint pain and get back to the activities they enjoy. Could it be right for you?**

One of the first things to consider if you're dealing with chronic joint pain is the impact it is having on your day-to-day life. "If pain and stiffness are interfering with your ability to perform everyday activities like walking or climbing stairs, and if other methods to control the pain are not working, then joint replacement surgery may be an option," says Orthopaedic Surgeon Andrew Holmes, MD. Some alternatives your doctor might recommend before considering surgery include exercises to strengthen the muscles around the joint, walking aids (such as a cane) to reduce stress on the joint, physical therapy and medication to relieve pain.

"Knee and hip replacements, which are the most common types of joint replacement surgeries, can help people of many different ages enjoy a better quality of life," Dr. Holmes says. For older patients, joint replacement surgery can also support greater independence by enabling seniors to continue everyday activities like walking or shopping.

If you think joint replacement surgery may be an option for you, your doctor can refer you to an orthopaedic surgeon, who can perform an evaluation and help you decide on the best course of action. ■

**The Total Joint Replacement Center provides comprehensive services for total knee and total hip replacements. For more information, go to [www.gwhospital.com/totaljointreplacement](http://www.gwhospital.com/totaljointreplacement).**

## **A TOTALLY special experience at GW Hospital**

The support patients receive from their doctors and care providers can make a big difference in recovering from joint replacement surgery. GW Hospital is totally committed to ensuring a positive experience every step of the way.

Two weeks before surgery, an educational "Joint Camp" for patients explains what to expect before and after surgery. Topics cover everything from exercise and home safety to fall prevention and getting out of bed.

After surgery, individual and group physical therapy sessions help patients get back on their feet, and teach them how to get around with walking aids. Also, occupational therapy provides guidance on everyday tasks like bathing and meal preparation.

Comfortable facilities promote activity and provide a supportive healing environment, so that patients can get started on a productive path to full recovery as quickly as possible.



“I knew my husband was *having a stroke* ...”

## Jim Taylor survives a massive stroke, thanks to the quick action of his wife and the team at GW Hospital

On November 16, 2015, Teresa Taylor’s husband, Jim, was reading in his home office. “I went to check on him before leaving to run errands, and noticed his face was twitching, his speech was slurred, his head was drooping and his arms were just hanging down,” says Teresa. “He was having a stroke - he had all the symptoms.”

Teresa called 9-1-1, and the paramedics took Jim to the Center for Trauma and Critical Care at the George Washington University Hospital. “Luckily, Teresa knew the signs of a stroke,” says Kathleen Burger, DO, Neurologist and Director of the Stroke Center at GW Hospital. “Jim arrived quickly and was given tPA, a clot-dissolving medication.

He had a slight improvement there,” says Dr. Burger. “Then we assessed his intravenous and endovascular systems by injecting dye into his arteries and found the clot, which was promptly extracted.” After the procedure, Jim was able to talk, raise his arms and walk, with no residual damage.

### Stroke treatment: crucial within the first three hours

Neurosurgeon and Interventional Neuroradiologist Dimitri Sigounas, MD, says receiving treatment within three hours of onset of stroke symptoms is crucial. “With the brain, if there is a clot, there is no backup blood flow supply, so after about six hours without circulation, the success of surgical intervention is cut dramatically,” says Dr. Sigounas.

Wayne J. Olan, MD, Director of Minimally Invasive Neurosurgery, treated Jim in the ER. “Testing confirmed that his right cerebral artery was narrowed, so we scheduled him to come back for a stent procedure,” says Dr. Olan. “By placing the stent, we prevented another stroke from occurring.”

### **Goal: treatment within 30 minutes of arrival**

The hospital’s designation as a Comprehensive Stroke Center (CSC) has caused an increase in patient volume and community awareness. “We’re the CSC closest to the White House, and we’ve become known as the place to go. Our outcomes have been spectacular,” says Dr. Olan. “Our goal is to have treatment initiated within 30 minutes of the patient’s arrival at the hospital,” says Dr. Olan.

Dr. Sigounas echoes Dr. Olan’s sentiments. “One stroke can add years to your brain age, and time lost is brain lost. First responders notify us if there’s a stroke patient coming in, and we activate the notification system. It’s incredibly responsive and impressive to watch,” says Dr. Sigounas. “I live close by, so if I am on call, I can get to the hospital within minutes of an emergency.”

Teresa says this was their first time at GW Hospital. “Jim is retired from the Navy, so he usually goes to Walter Reed Medical Center. But GW Hospital was the closest trauma center to us,” says Teresa. She was glad to see posters in the hallways about signs of stroke. “It’s good to remind people about that,” she says. “I’m glad I knew the signs of stroke – that and GW Hospital helped to save my husband’s life!” ■

**Visit [www.gwhospital.com/stroke](http://www.gwhospital.com/stroke) to watch how the multidisciplinary team cares for stroke patients.**

## **Recognize these signs of stroke and act FAST**

The most common symptoms of a possible stroke can be remembered by this acronym:



**FACE:** Ask the person to smile. Does one side of the face droop?



**ARMS:** Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift downward?



**SPEECH:** Ask the person to repeat a simple phrase. Is it slurred or strange?



**TIME:** is critical! If you see any of these signs, call 9-1-1 immediately.

**If these symptoms appear, DON'T WAIT! Call 9-1-1 or seek medical attention right away.**



# Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) and older adults

One of the most common health issues people face as they age is gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), also known as reflux.

**Marie L. Borum, MD, EdD, MPH, FACP, FACG,** Director of the Division of Gastroenterology and Liver Diseases, and a professor at The George Washington University School of Medicine & Health Sciences, explains more about GERD and how to minimize your symptoms.

## What is GERD?

GERD is the result of stomach acid backing up into the esophagus. According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, GERD affects about 20 percent of the population. If it happens more than twice a week for several weeks, you should see your doctor. Left untreated, it can lead to more serious health complications, such as an increased risk of esophageal cancer.

## What are the symptoms of GERD?

The most common symptom is called heartburn, which can include chest pain, coughing and a burning sensation in the chest. This discomfort can mimic cardiac problems, especially in older patients. Some people have regurgitation and can feel the stomach contents moving back up the esophagus, which can cause inflammation, a sour taste in the mouth, a cough or laryngitis.

## What causes GERD?

Eating highly processed, fatty or fast food is the most common cause of GERD. However, certain medications can also contribute to reflux. If you are older and overweight, or eat meals before going to bed, you may also be more likely to have reflux.

## How is GERD treated?

There are many over-the-counter and prescription medications that can treat the symptoms. Making changes in your diet, such as eating smaller, lighter meals, and having your last meal three to four hours before going to bed can also relieve symptoms. Avoiding chocolate, alcohol, coffee and peppermint is also recommended. Check with your doctor before using over-the-counter medications for long-term use, as they may interact with other medications you may be taking. ■



**For more information on GERD and other digestive disorders, visit [www.gwhospital.com/digestive](http://www.gwhospital.com/digestive).**

# *Moving forward* after cancer treatment

**GW Hospital's cancer survivorship clinic helps seniors and others navigate this new phase of life.**



The end of cancer treatment can be a time of great hope, but it can also be filled with questions about the future. “Many patients still need support coping with things like anxiety, weight management, and the physical and psychological side effects of treatment,” says Eduardo Sotomayor, MD, Director of the George Washington Cancer Center and Professor of Medicine at The George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences. The George Washington Medical Faculty Associates “Thriving After Cancer” survivorship clinic answers this need by providing comprehensive care, as well as guidance on healthy lifestyle choices.

Each patient receives an individualized survivorship care plan, with a summary of the treatment completed and a written plan containing follow-up care and screening recommendations. Professional staff members also address specific challenges patients are experiencing and provide referrals to specialists if needed.

“Collaborating with patients’ primary care doctors is an important part of the process,” notes April Barbour, MD, MPH, Director of Internal Medicine with GW Medical Faculty Associates and an associate professor of medicine with The George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences. “We look at all the aspects of a patient’s health and work together to provide the best care.” ■

## **Survivorship clinic services**

The care provided at the cancer survivorship clinic is tailored to meet each patient’s individual needs. Services available include:

- A free counseling program from a team of social workers and psychiatrists.
- Patient education, including a monthly education series.
- Referrals to physical therapy and rehabilitation resources and guidance on exercise.
- Consultations with a neurology provider for patients who may be experiencing cognitive problems after cancer treatment.
- Nutrition consultations with a registered dietitian.
- Support for caregivers and children.

**If you or someone you know has been treated for cancer and does not have a survivorship care plan, please call 202-741-2222 (Ext. 1), to make an appointment.**

**Kimberly Russo**  
CEO/Managing Director

**Susan Griffiths**  
Assistant Director, Marketing and Public Relations

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