



Devon Cumberbatch was shocked when she was diagnosed with breast cancer at only 34, but she found a new family with the care team at MedStar Montgomery.

Hear her story: [MedStarMontgomery.org/Devon](https://www.medsstar-montgomery.org/Devon)



Kim Wells, 49, is so grateful for her husband, Greg, who urged her to get checked for breast cancer, and for the care and support of the team at MedStar Montgomery.

Hear her story: [MedStarMontgomery.org/Kim](https://www.medsstar-montgomery.org/Kim)

Too young for breast cancer? Three women share their stories.

BY KATIE PARADIS

Devon Cumberbatch was preparing to play a concert in New York. Kim Wells was recently married. Tufor Tenny had a young son. Each woman had a busy life and so many plans. Battling breast cancer wasn't one of them.

October was Breast Cancer Awareness Month—an annual campaign to increase awareness of the disease, promote prevention, and improve treatment. But as Devon, Kim, and Tufor know too well, cancer doesn't care about dates on the calendar. It doesn't care about plans, and it doesn't care about age. They are three of the approximately 11,000 women under 50 who are diagnosed with breast cancer each year in the United States.

"I was shocked," says Devon, a grant writer from Silver Spring, Maryland, who was diagnosed in September 2019 at the age of 34. "When I went to my doctor for a lump in my right breast, I wasn't thinking cancer at all."

Tufor, a 37-year-old accountant from Gaithersburg, Maryland, agrees: "When you're young, you think, 'that's never going to happen to me.'"

Tufor felt the lump in her left breast in spring 2019, but had a history of fibroids and wasn't too concerned.

"I had a lump that would come and go," she says. "Then one day it came, and it never left."

Tufor also put off getting checked because she feared taking time from her new job for medical appointments, but a coworker convinced her to see a doctor.

It was a similar situation for Kim, 49, a clinical social worker from western Howard County.

"I'd always had a lump," Kim says. "But the pain was new." It was Kim's husband, Greg, who urged her to get checked.

"I come from a family of physicians," Greg says. "I've learned that if something doesn't feel right, it's not right." Kim was diagnosed the day before Christmas in 2019.

Following their breast cancer diagnoses, all three women chose MedStar Montgomery Medical Center for their treatment and care. They each elected to undergo mastectomies.



Behzad Doratotaj, MD

The Breast Health program at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center provides a comprehensive, specialized approach to caring for each patient, including state-of-the-art infusion and oral treatments, targeted radiation therapies, leading-edge breast-conserving surgical techniques, genetic counseling, and social services.



Tufor Tenny, 37, pictured with her son, encourages other women to do self-exams regularly and not to delay care when you know something is wrong.

Hear her story: [MedStarMontgomery.org/Tufor](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/Tufor)

"Our team fully supports our patients in making decisions," says Behzad Doratotaj, MD, Chief of Medical Oncology and Infusion at MedStar Montgomery. "We want them to know that we are their closest allies in this journey." The clinical team provides individual education and support for every patient—something for which Devon, Kim, and Tufor are extremely grateful.

"I can't tell you how much I felt cared for," says Kim of her care team at MedStar Montgomery. "And Dr. Doratotaj is one of kindest men I've ever met."

"It's almost like you were cared for by family," adds Devon.

Each woman credits the support they received from the MedStar Montgomery care teams, as well as their families and friends, for helping them through the struggles that can accompany cancer treatment, including hair loss, fatigue, fertility preservation, and emotional and psychological pain.

"Cancer wasn't in my life plan," Kim says. "But when I walked into MedStar Montgomery, I knew this is where I was supposed to be."

In addition, all three women stress the importance of taking care of yourself and advocating for your own health. "I cannot say it enough: Do your self-exams regularly," urges Tufor. ◀◀

To learn more about MedStar Health's Breast Health services at MedStar Montgomery, visit [MedStarMontgomery.org/BreastHealth](https://www.MedStarMontgomery.org/BreastHealth) or call 301-260-3301.

Mammographer urges annual screenings following her experience with breast cancer.

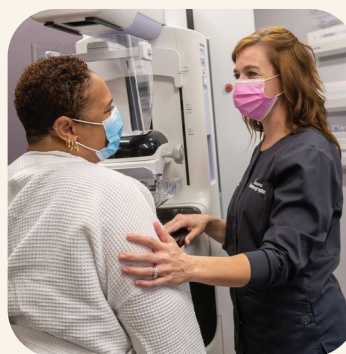
Laura Stottlemeyer knows that mammograms aren't popular. The mammography technologist at MedStar Breast Health & Imaging Center at MedStar Montgomery Medical Center also knows that many women, especially young women with no family history of breast cancer, may delay the screening because they feel they're not at risk of getting the disease. Laura was one of those women—until she was diagnosed at the age of 32.

"I not only understand breast cancer from a professional perspective," Laura says. "I've lived it."

Laura was a healthy and busy working mother who had no family history of breast cancer when she felt a pain in her right breast in 2007.

"It was a very specific pain," she says. "I could literally put my finger on it."

Laura performed self-exams regularly but says the sharp pain was her body's way of telling her to pay closer attention to that specific area of her breast.



Laura Stottlemeyer, mammography technologist at MedStar Montgomery, is a breast cancer survivor.

After her diagnosis, Laura underwent a lumpectomy followed by chemotherapy and radiation. Cancer-free for 13 years, Laura often shares her story with her patients.

"A lot of patients tell me, 'I'm not concerned because I don't have a family

history,'" she says. "While family history can play a huge part, it's not the main contributor, as 75% of those diagnosed with breast cancer have no family history."

The American Cancer Society recommends that women have the choice to start annual breast cancer screenings at 40 and that all women should receive annual mammograms starting at 45.

"Early detection is key because if breast cancer is caught early enough, we see a 99% treatment success rate," Laura explains. "As a mammographer, I know that if we don't get it right for the radiologist, then they can't diagnose it. That's a huge responsibility, so being able to get the best exam possible is something I take a great deal of pride in."

"I know no one likes mammograms," Laura laughs. "But I try to make it as comfortable an experience as I can." ◀◀