



MPTC Has Been Designated a Center of Excellence in Proton Therapy

MPTC is the leading proton therapy center in the region because of the experience of our physicians and staff. As the first and only proton therapy center in Maryland, we have treated more than 3,500 patients from 31 states around the nation and 15 countries across the globe. This is more than anyone in the region. For over six years, we have continued to exceed industry standards in the areas of expertise, technology, patient experience, research and diversity. MPTC is leading the industry in clinical trials, and our participants are among the most diverse in the country and closely match the demographics of our community. And because of our dedication to research, we have been named No. 2 in the U.S. for accruals to NRG clinical trials.



April is Head and Neck Awareness Month

There are approximately 110,000 cases of head and neck cancer diagnosed in the U.S. each year, and over 550,000 cases worldwide. It is a group of cancers that usually begin in the squamous cells that line the mucosal surfaces inside the mouth, nose, throat, and occasionally the salivary glands. With proton therapy, the risk of side effects, such as those affecting your sense of taste or smell, is reduced significantly. Studies have also shown that proton therapy can reduce the need for feeding tubes by as much as 60% in nasopharynx cancers and 50% in oropharynx cancers.



On a Scale of 1 to 10, How Well Are You Managing Your Stress?

April is Stress Awareness Month, and we wanted to use this time to *stress* the importance of learning ways to cope with it. We all experience stress differently, but it's defined as a physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension. And considering recent events, we've all dealt with more stress than usual.

Stress can affect us in many ways. Some of the risks of not managing stress well include increased depression, insomnia, a weakened immune system, high blood pressure, heart attack, fertility problems and more. This [study](#) found a link between stress and cancer. It suggests that stress hormones may wake up dormant cancer cells that remain in the body after treatment.

- Here are some easy ways to decrease stress and improve our overall health:
- Take care of yourself by eating healthy, exercising regularly, getting plenty of sleep, and taking a break when you feel stressed.
  - Talk about your problems and how you're feeling with someone you trust like a family member, friend, doctor or counselor.
  - Avoid coping with drugs and alcohol, as these can create additional problems and increase the stress you're already feeling.
  - Recognize when you need more help. Know when to reach out to a therapist or a social worker.



Join Us For The Neighborhood Spring Festival!

The University of Maryland and Maryland Proton Treatment Center are hosting a festival on Saturday, May 7 from 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Please join us for free food, fun games, health screenings and more! The event will be located at the parking lot on West Baltimore and South Poppleton streets. Look for the UMB and CEC banners.



Diet and Physical Activity Cancer Fact Sheet

Getting to and staying at a healthy weight, following a healthy eating pattern, avoiding alcohol, and moving more can help reduce your risk of cancer. [Read more.](#)



Addressing Psychosocial Needs in Cancer Care Has Improved Over Past 20 Years

Cancer survivors may experience psychological side effects, such as anxiety and depression. But they have more resources to turn to for support today, compared with 20 years ago. [Read more.](#)



**Staff Spotlight:**

**Matthew E. Witek, M.D., M.S.**  
Medical Director, Maryland Proton Treatment Center  
Assistant Professor of Radiation Oncology, University of Maryland School of Medicine

Dr. Witek specializes in the treatment of head and neck and skin cancers. He is trained in the use of proton and photon therapy, and is one of a handful of physicians who performs interstitial brachytherapy for the treatment of head and neck and skin cancers.

He also serves on numerous national-level guideline committees for organizations including the NCCN, ASTRO, ASCO, NRG and SCOUT and has been principal and co-principal investigator on several NCI/NIH-funded clinical trials.

He is passionate about educating future radiation oncologists and has been recognized for his efforts by the Association of Residents in Radiation Oncology's (ARRO) Teaching Award.

Clinical Trial Spotlight

[Selective Avoidance of Nodal Volumes at Minimal Risk \(GCC 20110\) \(SAVER\)](#)

Sponsor: University of Maryland, PI: Matthew Witek, M.D., M.S.

The goal of the SAVER trial is to reduce the radiation that is given to the side of the body that is opposite of where the tumor is or was located. Patients may be eligible for this study if they have HPV-related oropharyngeal cancer that will be treated with radiation.

In this trial, the patient's radiation treatment is planned specifically to avoid areas or lymph nodes that are at minimal risk.

The hypothesis is that this way of giving radiation will control disease as well as the standard approach, and reduce side effects compared to the standard approach to radiation planning.

**For more information or to be considered for the study, please call 410.369.5351.**