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VININGS MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

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How many times have you started a sentence with, “I have a pain in my ” or “I need help with...” You turn to someone who cares. You turn to someone who can help. You turn to a professional who has the answers.

Meet some of the top medical professionals in the Vinings area. Committed to and passionate about their respective areas of expertise, these doctors eagerly partner with their patients to produce the best possible outcome – a healthier, happier you.

DR. HODARI BROOKS

A partner with OrthoAtlanta, orthopedics and sports medicine specialists, Dr. Hodari Brooks performs orthopedic surgical procedures including total hip, knee and shoulder replacement, anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) reconstruction, rotator cuff repair and many other procedures. One of the things he most enjoys about his profession is having the ability to intervene in a patient's life to improve their quality of life in a relatively short period of time.

Dr. Brooks is skilled in performing direct anterior approach (or front) hip replacement for the relief of hip pain secondary to arthritis. A conservative and minimally-invasive alternative to traditional hip replacement, the anterior approach requires significantly less muscle dissection and cutting in order to perform the operation, leading to a faster initial recovery and quicker return time to work. Many patients are able to go home the same day of the operation. Technically more difficult than other surgical approaches, Dr. Brooks is pleased to offer this advantage to his patients.

Focused on restoring patient quality of life in as timely a manner as possible, Dr. Brooks utilizes state of the art surgical techniques. Dr. Hodari Brooks serves patients at OrthoAtlanta locations in Austell and Douglasville.

DR. JAHA HOWARD

The mere mention of a visit to the dentist can usher anxiety into the hearts of some children. Pediatric Dentist Dr. Jaha Howard relishes the opportunity to not only calm their fears, but leave them looking forward to the next visit. Dr. Howard is the owner of A+ Pediatric Dentistry of Atlanta. He is passionate about working with children, and he loves helping them develop a lifetime of healthy habits.

Dr. Howard says his favorite procedure is one he calls "Magic Trick." He explains, "For stubborn baby teeth that won't come out on their own, I enjoy helping them out in a unique way that the patients actually enjoy." Although fun may not be the word children initially use to describe a dental appointment, by the end of their time with Dr. Howard, they've enjoyed their visit.

"When we work as a team, our team gets clean" is his advice to patients. He works with parents to ensure a positive and beneficial experience for each patient. In fact, Dr. Howard says his mantra is to treat each patient like he would treat his own children. By operating in excellence and compassion, showing the love of God, Dr. Howard does just that.

DR. HARRY M. LIGHTFOOT, JR.

Dr. Harry M. Lightfoot, Jr. has made numerous large surgical incisions for gall bladder removal and hernia repair a thing of the past. Part of the team of Surgical Specialists at Cobb, WellStar Medical Group, Dr. Lightfoot puts cutting-edge medical advancements to work, for the benefit of his patients. Modern technology has increased his ability to control surgical instruments using four arms instead of two, thanks to robotics.

"Using the da Vinci robot allows me to complete more complex open operations (incorporating one large incision) with 3 or 4 small 0.5 to 0.8 cm incisions." The robotic-assisted procedures are his most popular. The innovative technology allows for operating on multiple body areas without repositioning the patient. So, a hysterectomy and a cholecystectomy (gall bladder removal) can be performed simultaneously. Ultimately, it can translate into a potentially shorter hospital stay, less postoperative pain and quicker return to normal activity.

Dr. Lightfoot's most memorable operation was performing a cholecystectomy on a 99-year-old patient. The patient was determined to return to her work as the head cook of a daycare center. Three days after her operation, she was back to feeding the children. Her drive inspired Dr. Lightfoot and personified his commitment to helping people.

Dr. Lightfoot lives by the mantra, humility with dignity. He encourages patients to educate themselves, and participate actively in their healthcare maintenance.

“Don’t ever be afraid to ask questions, and if your doctor can’t talk to you in a way in which you can understand, find a new doctor.”

DR. JOHN LIPMAN

Women travel from all over the world for treatment by Dr. John C. Lipman. He is the Founder and Medical Director of Atlanta Interventional Institute, one of the nation’s leading centers for treating uterine fibroids. The reason women come from as far away as Africa and Europe for this revolutionary treatment is because it is “cutting edge without cutting” and offers “surgery without a scalpel.” Patients come to the center in the morning and leave the same day with just a band-aid.

Uterine Fibroid Embolization (UFE) allows many women who may have been contemplating a hysterectomy to have a less invasive procedure and keep their uterus. UFE brings relief of symptoms and avoids the risks of a long recovery from surgery. Dr. Lipman says it is a gratifying experience to help women in this capacity.

His practice also offers treatment for other women’s health conditions, including infertility, migraine and rejuvenation, and other medical conditions such as cancer, stroke, blocked blood vessels and infections. Dr. Lipman joyfully speaks of many fibroid patients who were told they needed a hysterectomy, only to have children born after UFE. He’s also unblocked numerous patients’ fallopian tubes, resulting in pregnancies for couples who couldn’t afford IVF.

Dr. Lipman says the fuel to fulfill his purpose is found in Proverbs 11:25, “Whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.”

DR. JARRETT MANNING

“It was his smile.”

When her father first entered a room, Dr. Jarrett Manning said his smile captivated everyone around him. The beauty of her Dad’s smile caused Dr. Manning to want to bring that same type of joy and confidence to others. As the owner of JLM Dentistry, she has the opportunity to make that type of impact.

Cosmetic dentistry is very popular at her office, with an offering of services that includes teeth whitening, veneers, crowns and invisalign. Dr. Manning and her team stay up-to-date on the latest advances in dentistry. Enhancing the smile is important, but promoting education and healthy tooth and gum care is where she likes to start.

Dr. Manning recalls a former client wearing an ill-fitted denture. He’d lost his teeth due to poor care in his 20s, and had been wearing dentures ever since. He wanted to eat comfortably. He wanted a healthy smile. He wanted beautiful teeth. By educating the client, and guiding him through receiving dental implants, the JLM team helped restore confidence and inner joy ... through his smile.

The staff’s care and compassion, in addition to their ability to provide expert care, are what helps set JLM Dentistry apart from others. “My personal goals are to love God, serve as a leader, live a balanced life, and empower others,” states Dr. Manning. She expresses those goals through a simple mantra: “Do better and be better (to self and others).”

DR. MELINDA MILLER-THRASHER

Dr. Melinda Miller-Thrasher knows it is important for women to have choices. As a part of the progressive team at The Fibroid and Reproductive Care Center at Innovative Women’s Healthcare Solutions, she helps treat serious female conditions, while conserving a woman’s reproductive capabilities.

"I chose the field of Gynecology/Obstetrics because, in this field, I could have the biggest impact on women before, during, and after their reproductive years." She notes women often sacrifice their own care while caring for others. Her desire is to help them take care of themselves.

The most common procedure she performs is myomectomy, which rids a woman of fibroids, while preserving her uterus for future pregnancies. Dr. Miller-Thrasher is excited to offer this service because it serves as a viable option to a hysterectomy. In addition to the forward-thinking care and techniques employed, the staff at Innovative use the latest technology to engage patients, such as video-enhanced telemedicine conferences.

Technology and conveniences are wonderful, but nothing compares to giving patients back their quality of life. Dr. Miller-Thrasher impacts a patient from the inside out. Her mantra comes from a quotation from Maya Angelou: "People may not remember what you said, and they may not remember what you did, but they will always remember how you made them feel." Her goal is to make them feel better.

She concludes, "You only get one body. Take care of it."

DR. DON PARKERSON

A love of natural health and science, birthed at an early age, helped mold the future of Dr. Don Parkerson. While growing up, he watched his father work as a chiropractor in South Georgia. Dr. Parkerson says he saw people healed on a daily basis without the use of drugs or surgery. It impacted him. He was thoroughly intrigued, and the seeds of working as a chiropractor were sown. "I've been studying it nearly my whole life," he states.

Dr. Parkerson is a part of HP Spine Center, where they've specialized in upper cervical chiropractic for 65 years. "When I tell people I'm a chiropractor, they might assume that I twist or pop the spine. That's not what we do." Instead, they use a superlight, precise instrument to make adjustments to the top of the spine. Their work makes the center popular for patients in the area, as well as travelers from out-of-state.

Dr. Parkerson loves what he does, and also loves where he does it. He says of the Vinings area, "It's the perfect blend of city life with a community feel." He's lived in the area for 22 years and loves that work, church and school for his family are all within a 20-minute drive from home.

DR. TODD SACKS

Dr. Todd Sacks of Resurgens Orthopaedics finds it gratifying to help people enjoy daily living through reconstructive surgery. Hip, knee and shoulder arthroplasty and arthroscopy are his most popular procedures, with partial knee replacements proving highly successful. Patients regain confidence, mobility and are able to resume normal activities. But it's what his patients aren't gaining; that is an impressive part of what he does.

Dr. Sacks and his team reduce the risk of infection for their patients by wearing surgical space suits. The suits consist of a helmet with a battery-operated fan and a gown made of fabric which is fluid resistant. Having that extra layer of protection helps maintain sterility throughout bone and joint surgeries. Such measures help Dr. Sacks ensure he is giving his patients the best care possible.

As a child, Dr. Sacks loved being with his grandfather in his workshop, working with all of the tools. Inspired, Dr. Sacks now loves working with different tools, to benefit his patients and change lives.

He recalls a memorable reconstructive surgery on a man who'd been in a motorcycle accident twenty-five years earlier. He was in so much pain; he couldn't walk. After reconstructive surgery, the man is now back to living his life to the fullest, doing whatever he likes.

"I do everything in my power to give every patient the best possible surgical outcome," Dr. Sacks states. "Staying positive and working hard will allow positive results," he advises.

DR. ALAN GARDNER

Dr. Alan Gardner of Gardner Dermatology & Med Spa loves treating skin issues in patients of all ages. The most popular procedure he performs is using the fractional CO2 laser for skin resurfacing. Facial rejuvenation with the laser decreases fine lines, pore size, improves texture, tones and tightens skin. His practice also treats a number of other skin conditions, including age spots, eczema, skin cancer, varicose veins, and psoriasis. Dr. Gardner takes pleasure in the end results.

"I enjoy the surgical aspect of removing skin cancer and in-office surgical procedures. I also find a great deal of satisfaction helping a patient improve their appearance through cosmetic procedures," he explains. A creative person, Dr. Gardner has the ability to help transfer a person's look externally, and build up their confidence internally.

"It might seem like a small thing to some, but when you've seen a patient with acne or another skin disorder that has affected their self-esteem come back into the office with a renewed sense of self, it is amazing to be a part of that process," he states.

Dr. Gardner emphasizes the importance of a good skincare regimen. Sun protection and hydration are pivotal. He also notes that everyone should get a full body skin exam annually.

The mantra he lives by is, "Do the right thing for the right reason."

DR. TIFFINI BILLINGSLY

Impacting children now and positively for their future helps drive Dr. Tiffini Billingsly of Premier Pediatric Associates. Through education and medical guidance, she partners with parents to help produce healthy, happy children. Dr. Billingsly decided to pursue pediatrics because it allowed her the best option for practicing preventative care and to positively influence impressionable young minds.

"The opportunity to be a part of the healing process and preventing illness in children is quite rewarding," she states. "When I have seen a child who is obviously ill and I have the opportunity to treat him/her or provide advice to my parents to get their child on the road to recovery, there is no greater feeling," she adds. Often children return to her office weeks later, feeling much better and even in a playful mood. Seeing their improvement makes it all worthwhile.

Dr. Billingsly advises all of her young patients to strive at giving their best, to be kind to others and to love unconditionally. She adds that it's important to nourish their bodies with healthy food and exercise. The mantra Dr. Billingsly lives by is, "A vision only comes to fruition through faith, hard work, dedication and perseverance."

Her office sees patients for sick visits and well visits, as well as prenatal appointments.

DR. TY LIGHTFOOT

Giving a voice to those who may not be able to help themselves is what drives Dr. Ty Lightfoot, founder of Cora Lee Institute. Her practice provides diagnosis and treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder, as well as symptoms related to ADHD, anxiety, social difficulties, sensory integration deficits, genetic disorders and educational related concerns. The Institute offers psychological, group therapy (social skills), educational advocacy, specialized academic coaching and tutoring, with more services to come.

"I don't think that I chose my professional career; it chose me," she states. "I have always desired to and had an interest in helping those who may be misunderstood, mistreated and/or stigmatized." Her knowledge and insight have notably allowed her the opportunity to work with genetic disorders on the

Human Genome Project. She enjoys challenging academic research as well as the personal touch of dealing with patients. No matter what the field of endeavor, she abides by a guiding principle.

“I treat people as I want to be treated, loved and respected. I must have peace within myself when I lay down at night that I have done my best by those that utilize my services. Otherwise, everything that I do is in vain and against what Cora Lee, my grandmother, taught me.”

DR. ELIZABETH WHITAKER

Dr. Elizabeth Whitaker of Atlanta Face and Body Center sees plastic surgery and particularly facial plastic surgery as the perfect marriage of artistic and technical. As someone with experience performing a Signature Facelift on thousands of patients, she relishes the opportunity to help each person look and feel their best.

“To enhance or restore someone’s natural beauty is incredibly gratifying ... because we feel our most beautiful when we look our personal best,” she states. She explains that our self-esteem and confidence are maximized when we feel good about the way we look. Dr. Whitaker loves to share the story of a patient who had trouble clearing TSA airport security because they didn’t believe she was the older woman pictured on her driver’s license.

“If something is bothering you, don’t wait,” Dr. Whitaker states. “The number one thing I hear from patients is ‘I wish I had done it sooner.’” She notes that she employs noninvasive and minimally invasive techniques, and is happy to help a patient explore their options. Her philosophy is, “Everyone will notice. No one will know.” She desires to help you look natural and great for your age.

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