Welcome to the Weill Cornell Brain and Spine Center, a world-class provider of treatment for the full spectrum of neurological disease. We provide state-of-the-art care for adults and children with diseases of the brain and spine, and we offer a wide range of services. For patients who need surgery, there are many advanced, minimally invasive options available.

The Brain and Spine Center leads in the utilization of high-tech computerized diagnostic and treatment tools, from stereotactic radiosurgery using a linear accelerator to the use of three-dimensional visualization in the operating room. What was once a world of highly intrusive surgery has evolved into a high-tech environment of small incisions, tiny catheters, and minimally invasive endoscopes. The department also serves as a premier training center for neurosurgeons of the future and has achieved remarkable breakthroughs in research.

To ensure that every patient receives the compassion and dignity they deserve, and to achieve the most successful outcomes, we take a team approach that involves neurosurgeons, neurologists, neuroradiologists, anesthesiologists, nursing staff, patient care coordinators, and social workers. Our overall goals include minimizing pain, shortening hospital stays, and optimizing your recovering. Our neuroscientists are also making extraordinary breakthroughs in research that offer new hope in treating the most challenging neurological diseases of our time. For further information, please visit weillcornellbrainandspine.org.

If you ever have questions about your treatment, please call your physician’s office (there is a directory enclosed for your convenience). We are always happy to answer your questions and make sure we’re doing our best for you.

Sincerely,

Philip E. Stieg, Ph.D., M.D.
Professor & Chairman
Weill Cornell Department of Neurological Surgery
Neurosurgeon-in-Chief,
NewYork-Presbyterian/Weill Cornell Medical Center
ABOUT THE BRAIN AND SPINE CENTER

The Weill Cornell Medicine Brain and Spine Center is one of the country’s premier providers of minimally invasive surgery of the brain and spine for both adults and children. But we are so much more than a surgical center: We focus on the whole patient, offering services that don’t simply treat disease, but enhance brain and spine health. We treat patients from around the world for the full spectrum of neurological disease, from brain and spine tumors, stroke, aneurysms, and epilepsy to Parkinson’s disease and other movement disorders, with pre- and post-treatment services that optimize recovery and enhance quality of life.

With a world-class facility at the forefront of emerging technology, the Brain and Spine Center offers the latest in high-tech computerized diagnostic tools and treatment approaches, including stereotactic radiosurgery (often called the GammaKnife), endoscopic surgery, and three-dimensional visualization right in the operating room. Many of our patients have been featured in news stories that document the success of minimal access surgery; recent examples include spinal surgery to prevent paralysis and giant-sized brain tumors removed through the nasal cavity.

Our neurosurgeons are also researchers who are actively pursuing new frontiers of medicine in the laboratory and bringing their results to the bedside to improve patient outcomes. Recent advancements include the first use of focused ultrasound for treatment of essential tremor; the successful isolation of human stem cells from the human brain, both normal and brain tumor-derived; computer mapping of the brain to cure epilepsy surgically; a cure for eye cancer using tiny catheters; and a cutting-edge approach in pediatric brain surgery to treat hydrocephalus without shunts, sparing children from unnecessary infections. Clinical trials are underway for stroke, aneurysms, spinal fusion, metastatic spine tumors, and rare and inoperable pediatric brain tumors. On the horizon: deep brain stimulation for depression and a biological alternative to mechanical spinal disk replacement.

Our faculty members are also educators who teach medical students, residents, fellows, and physicians, both nationally and abroad. They design and present specialized training courses in skull base surgery, endonasal surgery, leading-edge pediatric surgery, and minimally invasive approaches to spine surgery.

Great new vistas exist for the treatment of neurological diseases of the brain and spine, and the future is happening now, right here at the Weill Cornell Medicine Brain and Spine Center. You are in the very best of hands here.

weillcornellbrainandspine.org
Neurological Surgery Residents

Benjamin Hartley, MD  
PGY-7

Evan Bander, MD  
PGY-6

Alexander D. Ramos, MD, PhD  
PGY-6

Joseph Carnevale, MD  
PGY-5

Jacob Goldberg, MD  
PGY-5

Gary Kocharian, MD  
PGY-4

Maricruz Rivera, MD, PhD  
PGY-4

Andrew Garton, MD  
PGY-3

Alexandra Giantini Larsen, MD  
PGY-3

Rafael Uribe-Cardenas, MD  
PGY-3

Umberto Tosi, MD  
PGY-2

Graham Winston, MD  
PGY-2

Natasha Kharas, MD, PhD  
PGY-1

Nakini Tata, MD, MPP  
PGY-1
Clinical Practitioners

Kristin Strybing
Chief Nurse Practitioner
MSN, FNP-BC

Susan Bacchiano
RN

Janessa Brown
RN

Edward Butler
ANP-BC

Erika Cabrera-Paulino
MSN, FNP-BC

Andrea Chang
RN

Rebecca Cramer
FNP-BC

Melissa Dickey
FNP-BC

Ana Forman
MSN, FNP-BC

Alexa Gura
MS, PNP-BC, CPN

Sarah Kramer
MSN, AGACNP-BC

Jenny Lam
RN

Sophia Mesfin
MSN, FNP-BC

Michelle Minoux
ANP

Please see reverse for additional staff >
Clinical Practitioners

Shilpa Nilavarath
MSN, AGNP-C

Giselle Payamps
BSN, RN

Sherlie Pierre
RN

Nicole Reilly
MSN, AGACNP-BC

Kimberly Salvaggio
MSN, FNP BC

Synda Schultz
MPAS, PA-C

Macie Tendrich
BSN, RN

Diana Yu
MSN, FNP-BC

Special Programs

Michelle Buontempo
Craniofacial Program Coordinator
MSN, RN, CCRN, CPNP

Amanda Cruz
Chiari CARE Program Coordinator
MPA, PA-C

Please see reverse for additional staff
Hospital Staff

Suzan Wollard
Chief Physician Assistant
MMSc, PA-C

Beth A. Higgins
Senior Physician Assistant
BSc, PA-C

Rita Bahnan
PA-C

Allison Basham
MSHSPA, PA-C

Carlos A. Castro
MMSc, PA-C

Nicole Doyle
PA

Cassidy Griffin
PA

Chloe Holland
MSHSPA, PA-C

Anna Kosmider
PA-C

Anna Kuo
MSHSP, PA-C

Rachel Lowrie
MS, PA-C

Julia Rich
PA-C
Brain Tumor Surgery
Benign and malignant tumors in adults and children
- Dr. Philip E. Stieg 212-746-4684
- Dr. Theodore H. Schwartz 212-746-5620
- Dr. Babacar Cisse 646-962-3389
- Dr. Mark Souweidane 212-746-2363 (pediatric)
- Dr. Jeffrey Greenfield 212-746-2363 (pediatric)
- Dr. Caitlin Hoffman 212-746-2363 (pediatric)

Cerebrovascular Surgery
Aneurysms, AVMs, carotid occlusive disease
- Dr. Philip E. Stieg 212-746-4684
- Dr. Jared Knopman 212-746-5149
- Dr. Justin Schwarz 212-746-2821

Stereotactic and Functional Neurosurgery
Parkinson's disease, essential tremor, and pain
- Dr. Michael Kaplitt 212-746-4966

Epilepsy Surgery
Curative and palliative surgical approaches to epilepsy
- Dr. Theodore H. Schwartz 212-746-5620
- Dr. Caitlin Hoffman 212-746-2363 (pediatric)

Interventional Neuroradiology
Minimally invasive image-guided diagnosis and treatment
- Dr. Y. Pierre Gobin 212-746-4998
- Dr. Srikanth Boddu 212-746-2821
- Dr. Jared Knopman 212-746-5149
- Dr. Justin Schwarz 212-746-2821

Neuro-oncology
Comprehensive treatment options for cancers of the brain and spine
- Dr. Howard Fine 212-746-2596
- Dr. Susan Pannullo 212-746-2438
- Dr. Rajiv Magge 646-962-2185
- Dr. Evan Noch 646-962-2185

Neuropsychology
Testing, psychotherapy, and cognitive remediation
- Heidi Bender, PhD 212-746-2197
- Amanda Sacks-Zimmerman, PhD 212-746-3356
- Jessica Spat-Lemus, PhD 646-962-3336

Pediatric Neurosurgery
Treatment of the full spectrum of CNS conditions in children
- Dr. Mark Souweidane 212-746-2363
- Dr. Jeffrey Greenfield 212-746-2363
- Dr. Caitlin Hoffman 212-746-2363
- Dr. Neil Feldstein 212-305-1396 (Columbia campus)

Pituitary Tumors/ Neuroendocrinology
Endoscopic approaches to anterior skull base surgery
- Dr. Theodore H. Schwartz 212-746-5620
- Dr. Babacar Cisse 646-962-3389
- Dr. Jeffrey Greenfield 212-746-2363 (pediatric)
- Dr. Georgiana Dobri 646-962-3556 (neuroendocrinology)

VISIT US ONLINE: weillcornellbrainandspine.org
Please see reverse for additional locations >
We are proud to be a part of NewYork-Presbyterian, which has been ranked as the #1 hospital in New York for nearly two decades. In addition to our main campus on the Upper East Side, we now offer our world-class neurosurgical services in Lower Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn. Patients come from around the globe for our experience and skill—now you can visit us close to home.

**NEW YORK-PRESBYTERIAN LOWER MANHATTAN**

646-962-5115

Minimally invasive and complex spine
Dr. Kai-Ming Fu, Chief of Neurosurgery
Dr. Michael Virk

**NEW YORK-PRESBYTERIAN QUEENS**

718-670-1837

Dr. John Park, Chief of Neurosurgery
Brain tumors, neuro-oncology, spine surgery
Dr. Ning Lin, cerebrovascular surgery
Dr. Srikanth Boddu, interventional neuroradiology
Dr. Rupa Gopalan Juthani, brain and spine tumors
Dr. Lynn McGrath, spine surgery
Dr. Caitlin Hoffman (pediatric) 212-746-2363

**NEW YORK-PRESBYTERIAN BROOKLYN METHODIST**

718-780-3070

Dr. Rohan Ramakrishna, Chief of Neurosurgery
Brain tumors, neuro-oncology, stereotactic neurosurgery
Dr. Martin Zonenshayn, movement disorders and peripheral nerve conditions
Dr. Michael Ayad, cerebrovascular surgery
Dr. Louis Chang, minimally invasive and complex spine
Dr. Justin Schwarz, cerebrovascular surgery
Dr. Caitlin Hoffman (pediatric) 212-746-2363

VISIT US ONLINE: weillcornellbrainandspine.org
Please see reverse for a directory of the faculty at the Upper East Side >
At the Weill Cornell Medicine Brain and Spine Center, our health care team provides compassionate, continuous care throughout your entire patient experience — and that doesn’t end when you’re discharged from the hospital. We know you’ve been through a lot, and we’re here to help if you need us.

Many patients get back to their lives quickly after surgery. Others need some support after the procedure, which is also quite valid and normal. If you have any questions about your recovery or how you’re feeling, please don’t hesitate to call your Weill Cornell surgeon’s office to speak with the doctor, nurse, or nurse practitioner about your experience. We can answer your questions, ease any anxiety you may be experiencing, and make suggestions about neuropsychological services we offer in the aftermath of surgery.

It’s important to realize that when your brain develops a disorder, suffers an injury, or undergoes surgery, that sense of self can be affected in many ways. You may have an emotional reaction to what you’ve just been through, which is, again, valid and normal. Some feelings may be neurological in origin if your surgery was near parts of the brain that control emotion. Some patients find that they also have cognitive changes after their surgery. For example, you may notice subtle (or not so subtle) changes in your memory, attention span, or language and word retrieval. That is to be expected—after all, you’ve just had a pretty challenging physical and emotional experience. The good news is that emotional, cognitive, and language challenges can be addressed as you recover, or even long after.

We understand, and we can help.

Our team of neuropsychologists, Drs. Heidi Bender, Amanda Sacks-Zimmerman, and Jessica Spat-Lemus specialize in neuropsychological assessment (both before and after surgery) and techniques aimed at improving cognitive and emotional recovery for patients who don’t feel quite like themselves after surgery.

Dr. Heidi Bender and Dr. Jessica Spat-Lemus offer neuropsychological evaluations, including pre- and post-surgical assessments across the lifespan, from pediatric to older adults. Both providers also offer cognitive remediation (individual and group). Please call Drs. Bender and Spat-Lemus’ office at 212-746-3356 to learn more.

Dr. Amanda Sacks-Zimmerman also delivers neuropsychological assessment in older adolescents and adults, as well as short-term interventions, including integrated cognitive remediation and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) (individual and group). Please call Dr. Sacks-Zimmerman’s office at 212-746-3356 to make an appointment for a consultation or to inquire about group sessions.

For more information about your condition, your surgery, or the services of the Weill Cornell Medicine Brain and Spine Center, please visit our web site at weillcornellbrainandspine.org
Why Don’t I Feel Like Myself?

The brain is an amazing organ. Although in one sense it is “just” an organ (like the heart, kidneys, or lungs), in another sense it’s so much more. Unlike other organs, your brain is deeply connected with your sense of who you are. Those many electrical impulses that fire along your neural pathways do more than just keep your body going. They also create your sense of self.

When your brain develops a disorder, suffers an injury, or undergoes surgery, that sense of self can be affected in many ways. You may have an emotional reaction to what you’ve just been through, which is normal. Some feelings may be neurological in origin if your surgery was near parts of the brain that control emotion. You may notice subtle (or not so subtle) changes in your memory, attention span, or language and word retrieval. This is also normal—after all, those processes are all controlled by the brain, which has just been through a difficult time. The good news is that emotional, cognitive, and language challenges can be addressed as you recover, or even long after.

The neuropsychologists at the Weill Cornell Medicine Brain and Spine Center want to help you complete your recovery, which is why we offer evaluation and testing along with the remediation services you may need to help you regain your sense of self.

Dr. Heidi Bender and Dr. Jessica Spat-Lemus offer neuropsychological evaluations, including pre- and post-surgical assessments. Please call Dr. Bender at 212-746-3356 or Dr. Spat-Lemus at 646-962-3336 to request a consultation.

Dr. Amanda Sacks-Zimmerman and Dr. Spat-Lemus provide individual and group cognitive remediation for patients who are experiencing neurocognitive difficulties (including attention, executive functioning, and memory). Dr. Sacks-Zimmerman also offers Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) for patients experiencing affective distress (anxiety and depression). Call Dr. Sacks-Zimmerman’s office at 212-746-3356 to make an appointment for a consultation or to inquire about group sessions.