



News Release

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New Minimally Invasive Procedure Offers Relief for Severe Leg Pain by Cleaning Out Arteries

Baptist Downtown Among the First to Offer Patients the SilverHawk™ Plaque Incision System to Open Blocked Leg Arteries

Jacksonville, Florida, April 6, 2006 – Baptist Medical Center Downtown patients now have another alternative in the treatment of a painful condition called peripheral vascular disease (PVD). The SilverHawk™ Plaque Excision System is a new FDA-cleared device for the safe removal of harmful plaque from blocked arteries in the legs.

This unique device uses a tiny rotating blade the size of a grain of rice to shave away large quantities of plaque from inside the artery. As it is excised, the plaque collects in the tip of the device and is then removed from the patient.

Before the arrival of plaque excision, treatments for PVD included angioplasty, stenting and open bypass surgery, an invasive procedure which requires creating a large incision and involves a hospital stay. Both angioplasty and stenting clear a channel in the artery for blood flow by pushing plaque up against the artery walls. However, patients often return within six months to have the procedure repeated because plaque has crept back into the artery and blocked it again.

The SilverHawk device used by Baptist Downtown cleans out the artery by removing the plaque altogether. Like angioplasty, plaque excision is a minimally invasive procedure performed through a tiny puncture site.

“Some of my patients cannot walk half a block without feeling severe cramping in their legs,” comments Robert Still, MD, chief of cardiovascular and thoracic surgery at Baptist Downtown. “This device provides great relief to those patients and has improved their quality of life immensely.”

“We have had excellent clinical results with the SilverHawk™ device,” said interventional radiologist Tim Daniel, MD. “It adds a new dimension of minimally invasive treatment for our patients with PVD. It enables us to treat patients who, in the past, would have had to go to open surgery.”

PVD affects nearly 12 million people in the United States. Similar to cardiovascular disease, PVD is caused by the buildup of fat and cholesterol, known as plaque, which disrupts normal blood flow to arteries in the vascular system. Symptoms of the disease often include severe pain, numbness, tingling or weakness in the leg. Leg pain, known as claudication, can be so extreme that patients may have difficulty in walking short distances.

If left untreated, PVD ultimately can lead to amputation. Last year alone, more than 150,000 amputations were performed in the U.S. In a number of hospitals across the country, plaque excision has been used to save the patient's leg from amputation after other interventions have failed.

Those at risk of developing PVD include patients with high blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol. Other contributing factors include obesity, smoking and an inactive lifestyle. Screening for peripheral vascular disease is simple and painless, so consult with your physician if you are at risk.

“Using this procedure, we can remove large quantities of plaque entirely instead of simply compressing it against the vessel wall and hoping it won't come back,” said Still. “Cleaning out the arteries effectively gives a patient's legs a second chance.”

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Baptist Health is a faith-based, mission-driven system comprised of Baptist Medical Center Downtown, Baptist Heart Hospital, Baptist Medical Center Beaches, Baptist Medical Center Nassau; Baptist Medical Center South and Wolfson Children's Hospital - Jacksonville's only children's hospital. Baptist Health also includes cardiology and cardiovascular surgery services, a comprehensive cancer center, orthopaedic institute, women's resource center, a full range of psychology and psychiatry services, outpatient facilities and a network of primary care physicians' offices throughout Northeast Florida. Baptist Health is the official healthcare provider for the Jacksonville Jaguars.

For more information, visit www.e-baptisthealth.com