



MEDIA ALERT

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Baptist Health Helping To Educate Public About Peripheral Artery Disease (PAD) During Awareness Week September 18-22

Baptist Medical Center Downtown Is Leader in PAD Treatment, Including New Minimally Invasive Procedure That Relieves Severe Leg Pain by Unblocking Arteries

Jacksonville, Florida, September 18, 2006 – Too many people with blocked leg arteries, known as peripheral artery disease or PAD, attribute the associated pain, numbness, tingling or weakness to aging and don't seek medical treatment. To raise awareness of this little-known disease with potentially severe consequences, September 18-22 is the first PAD Awareness Week. Baptist Health is helping in a nationwide effort to improve awareness of PAD's signs and symptoms, as well as diagnosis and treatment options.

“The effects of PAD can extend beyond severe pain. If left untreated, the condition can lead to gangrene, amputation and increased risk of heart attack and stroke,” said Salvatore DiLoreto, MD, a cardiologist at Baptist Heart Hospital. “It is critical to educate the public and caregivers about PAD to help save leg and life.”

PAD affects nearly 12 million people in the United States. Similar to cardiovascular disease, PAD is caused by the buildup of fat and cholesterol, known as plaque, which disrupts normal blood flow to arteries in the vascular system. The leg pain associated with PAD can be so extreme that patients may have difficulty walking short distances.

Baptist Health is saving legs and improving life for many of these patients with the latest alternative in the treatment of PAD. The SilverHawk™ Plaque Excision System is a new FDA-cleared device for the safe removal of harmful plaque from blocked arteries in the legs. “Some of my patients cannot walk half a block without feeling severe cramping in their legs,” says Tim Daniel, MD, an interventional radiologist with Baptist Medical Center

Downtown. “This device provides great relief to those patients and has enabled them to return to the activities that they enjoy.”

Last year, 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 peripheral interventions have failed.

Those at risk of developing PAD include patients with high blood pressure, diabetes and high cholesterol. Other contributing factors include obesity, smoking and an inactive lifestyle. The blocked arteries found in people with PAD also indicate the likelihood of narrowed arteries to the heart and the brain, making PAD a powerful warning sign of existing cardiovascular disease and heart attack or stroke.

Baptist Medical Center Downtown Provides Breakthrough PAD Treatment

The SilverHawk™ Plaque Excision System used by Baptist Downtown is a unique device that 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 then is removed from the patient.

Before the arrival of plaque excision, treatments for PAD 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 cleans out the artery by removing the plaque altogether. Like angioplasty, plaque excision is a minimally invasive procedure performed through a tiny puncture site.

“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,” says DiLoreto.

“Cleaning out the arteries effectively gives a patient’s legs a second chance,” agrees Daniel.

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Baptist Health is a faith-based, mission-driven system comprised of Baptist Medical Center Downtown and 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