

Script – Print - Aneurysm Treatment Advancement

OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony performs first regional procedure using new device

Sue McCormick takes medication to keep her blood pressure in check and, like any good patient, sees her primary care physician regularly. However, this past July, while at work, she began to feel shaky and said her eyes felt like they were pulsating. A check of her blood pressure showed it was extremely high - 245 over 145.

The 66 year old immediately went to the emergency department where her doctor ordered a cat scan. The test found an aneurysm behind her left eye and it was not normal.

Further diagnosis by OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center neuro-interventionist, Dr. Akram Shaddeh, via a catheter-based angiogram, provided close-up video of a large, wide-necked aneurysm.

It was quickly concluded that traditional aneurysm treatments would not suffice. A new device, called a flow diverter, would have to be used. And though it would be a first for the surgeon, it is a device and technique on which both Dr. Shaddeh and his colleague, neuro-interventionist, Dr. Ayman Ghieth, were trained and familiar.

"Historically, we've had a difficult time trying to treat an aneurysm that is both large and has wide neck," says Dr. Ayman Gheith, neuro-interventionist at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center. "A flow diverting device is a device that's put into the artery itself and its job is to direct flow away from the aneurysm and direct the pressure also away from the aneurysm - while allowing blood to passively seep through the device into the aneurysm and sit, basically, in the aneurysm and clot. And when that occurs it heals the aneurysm."

McCormick's surgery was scheduled a few weeks later. And while she understood the nature of her condition and sensitivity of the surgery, she says the procedure did not worry her after it was understandably explained by Dr. Shaddeh.

"And you could tell by talking with him, how he spoke, that it's in his soul," says OSF aneurysm patient Sue McCormick. "He loves what he does. And I was not scared at all."

As a comprehensive stroke center, the neurosurgical program at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center constantly works at being cutting edge. That means being able to use all the devices at your disposal to treat any patient.

Dr. Ghieth calls the flow diverter a "game changer" because we can now treat aneurysms like Sue McCormick's - that were a death sentence just a few short years ago - and Saint Anthony is the only medical center in the region doing them.

"All of these devices, the purpose of using them, is to lower the risk to the patient," says Dr. Ayman Gheith, neuro-interventionist at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center. "I now have a new way to treat aneurysms very faithfully which was not available to us. And that's the biggest difference is working to lower the risk of a patient during surgery and to give them an outcome that's permanent - that given them a healing outcome, permanently."

"Aside from maybe one or two hospitals in Chicago, we're the only people - OSF and this program - is the only people that can use a device like this," says Dr. Ayman Gheith, neuro-interventionist at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center. "We're the only people in Rockford that can do that, for sure."

McCormick was discharged within 24 hours of her flow diverter procedure and, she says, she's doing just fine.

"There's no discomfort," says OSF aneurysm patient Sue McCormick. "It's very comfortable. And the nurses treat you like you're the queen of the day. I love OSF. I truly do. They just did good things for me."

To learn more about the neurosurgery program at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center, go to <https://www.osfhealthcare.org/saint-anthony/services/neurology/>.