

Script – Print – REBOA: A Life Extending Tool

New device can make a difference for some trauma patients

When it comes to treating trauma patients, time is of the essence. Thanks to a new live-extending tool called Resuscitative Endovascular Balloon Occlusion of the Aorta or REBOA for short, OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center is able to offer critically-injured patients a device that may ultimately save their life.

"It's a fancy way of saying we are able to occlude the aorta and profuse the vital organs of the brain, heart and the lungs in an effort to save a patient's life who has suffered a devastating trauma, such as a gunshot wound or massive blunt trauma, where the blood pressure is very low and he may risk having his chest opened in an emergent fashion," says Robert Dice, Trauma and Burn Program Manager for OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center.

This technique involves rapidly placing a flexible catheter into the femoral artery, maneuvering it into the aorta and inflating a balloon at its tip. This stops blood flow beyond the balloon, essentially halting any bleeding, while also stopping all blood flow to the balloon. This is a temporary maneuver and is a bridge to get the severely injured patient to the operating room. Instead of the patient bleeding out, the REBOA will stop that and hopefully reduce the need for blood transfusion.

"The old way of doing business is when the patient's heart stops with CPR in progress, we would open the patient's chest in the emergency room, fix the hole, fill the tank back up with blood and hopefully the patient will survive," says Robert Dice, Trauma and Burn Program Manager for OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center. "This device allows us to intervene in the hypotensive with blood pressure of 50, preserve central circulation and quickly get the patient upstairs where any surgeries or procedures will be done under the sterile environment of the operating room."

The REBOA is approximately two years old and not offered in many emergency rooms across the country. All surgeons have been trained on the REBOA at OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center, the only local trauma center to use the device.

"I don't know if the general public knows this but most of our trauma surgeons work in the Chicago area. They bring that level of trauma care to the Rockford area. Robert Dice, Trauma and Burn Program Manager for OSF HealthCare Saint Anthony Medical Center. "They're very aggressive trauma surgeons, they intervene quickly and we're having good outcomes. My entire job is looking at process improvement and opportunities for improvement. Having worked for trauma centers in Baltimore, I've seen very good, positive outcomes here in Rockford. I think it's a testament to the quality of trauma surgeons we've recruited."