

New pulmonary valve improving quality, length of life

OSF HealthCare Newsroom

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Around 500,000 people undergo open-heart surgery a year in the United States. New technology being used by OSF HealthCare is hoping to bring that number down.

Starting this year, OSF began offering the Alterra Pre Stent to patients in Peoria. The FDA-approved valve consists of a catheter-based stent (called Alterra), an artificial heart valve (SAPIEN 3) and the opportunity to implant the stent and valve without the need for open-heart surgery.

Priti Patel, MD, is the director of the Pediatric and Congenital Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory for OSF HealthCare. She says this new technology will expand peoples' lives and enhance their quality of life.

"The advantage of the procedure is that the patient is up and awake, walking around after six hours. They get to go home the next day," Dr. Patel says. "With open-heart surgery, they are in the hospital for a longer period of time, and they have to recover from the sternotomy. Here, there is no recovery. There are no stitches in the groin, and they are going back to school or work the following day."

The abovementioned sternotomy is a procedure where a surgical incision is made through the breastbone (sternum) to access the thoracic cavity for open-heart surgery.

"The goal is to prevent repeated open-heart surgeries. The more sternotomies and open-heart surgeries they have, the more risk they have each time. With this, you can prevent that from happening," Dr. Patel adds. "You can do the procedure and see the results right away. The patients feel good when they wake up, because it is easy to breathe."

Dr. Patel says the new pulmonary valve is supposed to last 10 years. This current pulmonary valve that is in place allows you to be ready for another less-invasive procedure when the time comes.

"Now when it's needed, you can put multiple valves inside it. So, you can get these 40-50 years out without needing any open-heart surgeries," Dr. Patel says.

Dr. Patel and her team administered four pulmonary valves in patients this spring, with two more procedures planned in August. These procedures happen at the OSF HealthCare Children's Hospital of Illinois Congenital Heart Center located at OSF HealthCare Saint Francis Medical Center. Dr. Patel says these patients come from all across the State of Illinois and can continue their health journey with their care team at OSF. They can perform the procedures on people of all ages.

If you or someone you know could benefit from speaking to a cardiologist, you can find more information here: <https://www.osfhealthcare.org/childrens/services/heart/>