

Script – Broadcast – Don't miss a beat when it comes to heart valve disease

INTRO

Heart valve disease, which happens when one or more of your heart valves don't work properly, is becoming an increasing problem among older adults.

According to the American College of Cardiology, every year about five million people in the country are diagnosed with valvular heart disease (VHD), with nearly 25,000 people dying from it.

February 22 is National Heart Valve Disease Awareness Day, a day during American Heart Month to raise awareness of the risks, symptoms and treatment options available for patients.

(((SOT)))

Alejandro Aquino (A-KEEN-O), MD, structural heart specialist with OSF HealthCare Cardiovascular Institute

"Valvular heart disease is an important issue to recognize and treat, given the repercussions they may have for patients' health," says Alejandro Aquino, MD, a structural heart specialist with OSF HealthCare Cardiovascular Institute. "We currently estimate more than 2% of patients have some degree of valvular heart disease, and it's a growing problem and a problem that we understand is unrecognized and undertreated." (:19)

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Anyone can experience a heart valve issue and the risk increases as you get older. You may be at a greater risk if you've had a heart attack or heart failure or have a risk for coronary heart disease.

HVD can develop quickly or over a long time. Symptoms may include:

- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Fatigue
- Dizziness or fainting
- Fever
- Irregular heartbeat

TAG

HVD is treated either by medication or if it's causing severe symptoms, surgery may be the better option. Dr. Aquino says recent advancements have given patients the option of replacing a valve with a catheter instead of surgery. He adds that it's best to be seen by a cardiologist to make those determinations. The bottom line is to listen to your body. If you notice or experience any abnormal symptoms, contact your physician as soon as possible.