

Major Relief through Minimally Invasive Procedures

If you need to be treated for any number of medical conditions, most people would agree having the least invasive treatment possible is preferred. That's why interventional radiologists are so important - they specialize in minimally invasive, targeted treatments, combining diagnostic and clinical experience across all specialties. They use X-rays, MRI and other imaging to advance a catheter in the body, usually in an artery, to treat at the source of the disease internally.

OSF HealthCare Little Company of Mary Medical Center in Evergreen Park has a new, state-of-the-art interventional radiology suite and became one of a small handful of centers in the nation to offer this state-of-the-art imaging system. It combines two types of imaging technology, CT and fluoroscopy, in one single machine, which allows providers to be more precise in addition to shortening procedure times with fewer trips to the hospital for patients.

For many years, surgery was the only treatment available for many conditions. Today, many conditions can be treated less invasively by interventional radiologists.

"It's a field where it deals with almost every body system and you use the technology to solve problems that we couldn't solve before and provide treatment options that we couldn't before. Or you could use that technology to provide treatment options that are just safer or minimally invasive, ultimately leading to good patient outcomes and just more of a minimally invasive approach," explained Hamid Nazeer, D.O., Medical Director, Interventional Radiology, OSF HealthCare.

Interventional radiology treatments offer less risk, less pain and less recovery time compared to open surgery and are first-line care for a wide variety of conditions. It can be used to freeze and destroy cancer cells, remove blood clots, cauterize and close abnormal veins, fix spinal fractures, insert and fix dialysis catheters, and drain pockets of infection inside the body.

"During the peak of the pandemic, you know, in order to keep everybody safe and to get certain measures in place, we were only performing very critical and urgent procedures - whether they were in the hospital or they were outpatient. And specific examples of those are, you know, patients that maybe had blood clots in their lungs. Patients who had blockages in their kidneys or their liver. Or patients that had to undergo dialysis. Those urgent procedures," said Dr. Nazeer.

Additional areas that interventional radiology can treat include: deep vein thrombosis, varicose veins, gastrointestinal issues, uterine fibroids, pain management, and more.

"Now we've pretty much opened up to offering every other procedure that we have here, and we can do it in a very safe way. Those may include patients that have varicose veins, and they've been bothering them, you know, and they need to get those treated. Patients who have chronic back pain. Or if you're talking about patients that have uterine fibroids. Or patients who have cancer and they need a treatment for that," Dr. Nazeer continued.

As OSF HealthCare brings elective procedures that had been curtailed or cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic back online, it continues to take extra measures to ensure the highest level of patient safety across the 14-hospital Ministry. All rooms and equipment are sterilized between procedures and all OSF HealthCare Mission Partners (employees) wear masks and proper PPE when necessary.

In accordance with CDC and IDPH guidelines, all patients who are scheduled for any procedure will undergo a COVID-19 test prior to their scheduled appointment.

“You’ll go ahead and get registered. They’ll make sure that they test you as you’re coming in – we’re doing temperature checks on all of our patients. We’ll make sure we keep you in a nice, isolated area. Then you’ll come over to our clinic and get your evaluation and then if you are a candidate for a certain type of treatment option, then we’d go ahead and get you scheduled,” said Dr. Nazeer.

Medical providers encourage everyone to seek medical care immediately in emergency situations such as a heart attack or stroke. Call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest emergency department for care.