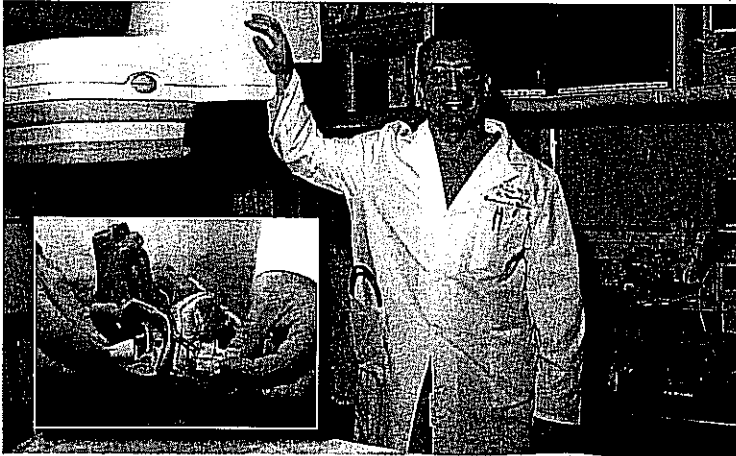


NEW PROCEDURE PATCHES "Hole in the Heart"



Dr. Edward Portnay in the Cath Lab and inset, holding a Cardioseal in front of a model heart.

A new minimally invasive procedure to patch up a hole in the heart, a common but potentially fatal problem, has been introduced to Fairfield County at St. Vincent's Regional Heart & Vascular Center.

Using a device known as "Cardioseal," St. Vincent's cardiologist Edward Portnay, MD, recently repaired a hole in the heart of 39-year-old Nicole Calarco of Norwalk, a mother of two young children.

In the past the repair would have required open heart surgery, but the new procedure takes only an hour and a half and does not require surgery. Patients typically stay overnight and return home the next day.

"The minimally invasive procedure once again lowers the threshold for treatment and creates new options for patients. We were able to introduce this procedure because we are an established heart program with a history of constant advances in diagnostics, therapeutics and prevention programs," said Jose Missri, MD, Chief Medical Officer and Vice

President, Cardiovascular Services at St. Vincent's.

Like most otherwise healthy young people with the heart defect, Nicole Calarco had no idea that she had a hole in her heart until she had a small stroke.

"In the past a lot of people wouldn't have gotten a second chance. I feel like I have a new lease on life."

A woman who eats well and exercises regularly, Calarco quickly recovered from the small stroke but underwent tests to determine the cause. The diagnosis: Patent Foramen Ovale (PFO) commonly known as a "hole in the heart," the leading cause of stroke in young people.

According to Dr. Portnay, most of us are born with this "hole in the heart," but it usually closes up in the first 2-4 weeks of life. However, in 15-20% of people, it stays open and can cause

major problems or even death later on.

Once treated, most patients can return to normal activity quickly. Calarco was working out in her local gym within two weeks and returned to work in the third week after surgery.

"In the past a lot of people wouldn't have gotten a second chance. I feel like I have a new lease on life," said the single mother after her recovery.

Dr. Portnay described PFO as a defect in the wall between the two upper (atrial) chambers of the heart. The wall, which seals shut in most people, doesn't close all the way, but a valve-like flap forms allowing the blood to flow over to the left atrium and bypass the filtering system of the lungs. The result can be debris or small clots in the blood that pass freely to the brain or other organs.

Unfortunately, PFO is not usually diagnosed in young people until they have a small stroke or transient ischemic attack (TIA) symptoms that last for 24 hours or less.

While many people can walk around with PFO for years and not know it, a cough, sneeze or straining in the chest can trigger the problem by opening the flap and allowing the blood to flow in either direction between the two chambers.

The new Cardioseal device allows the cardiologist to seal the hole in a minimally invasive way. Much like an angioplasty procedure, the doctor creates a puncture hole at the top of the leg, through which he inserts the device. He then threads it through the artery to the heart, where he inserts it in the hole, immediately closing the hole, while allowing the tissue to grow over it and permanently seal.

Remembering SWIM Leaders

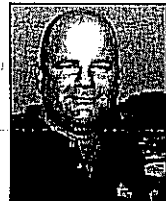


Marilyn Goldstone

Community and SWIM leader Marilyn Goldstone passed away at St. Vincent's. Marilyn, 63, was a prolific fundraiser for a number of charities especially the Swim Across the Sound over the last fifteen years, and a loyal member of the St. Vincent's family.

"Marilyn was a great friend to St. Vincent's over the years, helping to raise money as well as awareness of the Swim through her direct, no-nonsense approach to fundraising," said St. Vincent's Foundation President Ronald J. Bianchi.

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Dave Parcells

Dave Parcells, Swim Marathon Director and nationally recognized amateur swimmer, recently passed away while swimming a Florida marathon.

For the last three years, Parcells directed the Swim Marathon Day that involved about 200 amateur swimmers. He was responsible for recruiting swimmers and overseeing the entire race operations.

Ron Bianchi, President of St. Vincent's Foundation, said the Swim suffered a serious loss with Parcells'

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Temporary Parking Changes: Frequently Asked Questions

As the Master Facilities Plan is implemented, we will see and hear many new and exciting sights and sounds on our campus. One of the three main components of the plan is to increase and enhance parking for our patients, visitors, physicians, volunteers and employees. In order to do that, however, we need to make some

Your top 10 parking questions:

Why will parking be an issue as we begin construction?

Beginning on Monday, June 18th, we will be "losing" the majority of parking in the front and physicians' parking lots, as we begin to use this space for expansion of our Emergency Department and the construction of the new parking garage.

day shift employees who pay through payroll deduction, including the 7 a.m.-7 p.m. shift with reserved status. If an employee inappropriately parks in the Hunting Garage, you will be charged \$20.

Will I have to purchase tokens for the Main Street Lot?

No, employees will access and exit the Main Street Garage with their

Reserved physician spaces will be clearly marked, and valet service will be available to physicians at no cost.

Will the parking changes affect patient/visitor parking or valet services?

Patients and visitors will have two options for parking: valet or the Hunting Street Garage. Reserved spaces for the disabled will remain on the main floor of Hunting, and additional reserved