

WATCHMAN™ Implant for Atrial Fibrillation

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It's reassuring to know I can eliminate my risk of internal bleeding, stop taking blood thinners and return to a more normal way of life.

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North
Kansas City
Hospital

Travis, WATCHMAN patient

North Kansas City Hospital is the first Northland hospital to use the WATCHMAN Left Atrial Appendage Closure Implant to reduce stroke risk in people with atrial fibrillation (AFib). As a result, taking blood thinners may no longer be necessary.

Nearly 2.7 million people in the U.S. live with atrial fibrillation. One in three people with AFib will have a stroke. WATCHMAN is a minimally invasive procedure that reduces the risk of stroke in people with AFib not caused by heart valve problems.

Atrial Fibrillation

An atrial fibrillation diagnosis means a person has an irregular heartbeat that can lead to blood clots, stroke, heart failure and other heart-related complications. In people with AFib, more than 90% of the clots that form in the heart develop in the left atrial appendage (LAA). If a clot leaves the LAA, it can enter the circulatory system, travel to the brain and cause a stroke. The WATCHMAN implant seals the LAA, preventing blood clots from escaping and reducing the risk of stroke.

Blood Thinner Alternative

People with AFib often take blood thinners to reduce their stroke risk. While blood thinners are effective, the dietary restrictions, frequent blood monitoring and increased risk of bleeding complications can affect quality of life. The WATCHMAN implant offers an alternative to taking blood thinners.

WATCHMAN Qualifications

To be considered for the WATCHMAN procedure, a person must:

- Have atrial fibrillation not caused by heart valve problems
- Be at an increased risk for stroke as determined by test results
- Be able to take blood thinners
- Need an alternative to blood thinners

The Procedure

The implanted device is about the size of a quarter. Through a small incision in the upper leg, a WATCHMAN-trained cardiologist guides a narrow tube with the implant attached into the heart. The implant is placed into the opening of the LAA, creating a seal. The minimally invasive procedure lasts approximately one hour, and patients are under general anesthesia.



Benefits

With WATCHMAN, recovery is faster and easier than open heart surgery. Patients typically leave the hospital the day after the procedure and return to normal activity within one week. Most people discontinue Coumadin about 45 days after receiving the implant. They take Plavix for up to six months, and a daily aspirin for life.

Your Heart Team

Our dedicated team of interventional cardiologists, electrophysiologists, anesthesiologists and clinical staff members evaluate WATCHMAN patients before and after the procedure. They stay with their patients every step of the way.

Risks

The most serious risks include bleeding complications, infection, LAA rupture and death from any cause.

For more information, visit nkch.org/WATCHMAN or contact your cardiologist. If you do not have a cardiologist, call Meritas Health Cardiology at 816.221.6750.



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Where your care is personal.