

INTERVENTIONAL CARDIOLOGY

Saving Hearts and Limbs

Interventional cardiologist Dr. Zia U. Khan is on a heartfelt mission to save hearts and limbs without the use of invasive surgery and amputation.

Photo by LV Photography

Zia U. Khan, MD, is a board-certified interventional cardiologist with a special interest in peripheral vascular disease. Peripheral arterial disease (PAD) affects more than 6.5 million Americans above the age of 40. Two million Americans are affected by critical limb ischemia (CLI), and within six months of diagnosis, 40% of them have undergone a major amputation.

Ubiquitous as it is, peripheral vascular disease has a way of sneaking up on people. Someone may feel a constant coldness in their feet or cramping in the legs. Perhaps their toes have darkened in color or the feet are swollen.

“These symptoms may seem random, but for an adult with a history of smoking, high cholesterol, hypertension, diabetes, and obesity, even just a cold sensation in their feet may be reason enough to seek medical attention,” says Dr. Khan, founder of Desert Cardiovascular Consultants in Las Vegas. “People tend to ignore the signs and symptoms because they are busy or just unaware of how peripheral vascular disease progresses—or they don’t think it can happen to them,” he says. “But, if you have any of these symptoms, it could mean an incompetent vein or blocked peripheral artery.”

Small Cuts, Big Results

Besides focusing on acute and chronic cardiac problems, a large part of Dr. Khan’s practice consists of peripheral vascular disease patients. PAD carries a high morbidity and mortality rate, and, unfortunately, many primary care physicians are unaware of the latest advancements in the nonsurgical management of CLI. Simply put: Peripheral venous disease goes underdiagnosed and untreated.

Until recently, taking care of advanced vascular disease meant extreme surgeries with long recovery times. A blocked artery required bypass surgery, in which a surgeon

cuts open the patient and inserts an artificial tube to redirect blood flow.

Such procedures can be intensely debilitating for patients who may have pre-existing conditions that make them fragile to begin with.

Dr. Khan’s practice focuses on early diagnosis and prevention. His freestanding, office-based peripheral vascular lab offers full-service diagnosis and on-site interventional treatments so patients don’t have to go to the hospital, a trip which can include confusing check-ins, long wait times, and higher infection risks.

At Dr. Khan’s practice, treating a blocked artery may involve navigating a tiny ultrasound camera through the blood vessels to reach the artery, shaving off problematic plaque using cutting devices,

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A lot of cardiovascular diseases are mechanical problems. Your body literally has a plumbing problem. Treating that with medications and diagnostics isn’t enough. As cardiovascular interventionists, we intervene to treat the patient by cleaning up the blockage and fixing the leaking valves.

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**Dr. Zia U. Khan
Interventional Cardiologist
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and inserting small metallic coil stents to keep the artery open. “We don’t chop limbs and leave scars,” says Dr. Khan. He likens the approach to needlepoint: precise, intentional, and with little more than a pinprick at the site of entry. “We now have the ability to better image major abdominal veins and place stents at the site of compression,” he explains.

With this approach, the recovery process is also remarkable. Instead of experiencing a painful and lengthy convalescence, patients get almost immediate relief. Most patients can walk out of the office on the same day. Dr. Khan recalls one patient who returned to the office a few days after her treatment wearing high heels and bearing a tray of treats for the whole team. It was the first time she had been able to wear heels in 5 years.

Practicing with Compassion

At Desert Cardiovascular Consultants, compassion for patients is as important as excellent medical care. “We want patients to feel that they have finally arrived at a place

of recovery. We show them that there is hope no matter what stage their disease is at,” Dr. Khan says. For Dr. Khan and his team, there is no such thing as too many questions or requests. Patients come first. They can expect round-the-clock service as well as access to resources that include a network of professionals, such as dietitians and physical therapists, who can help them on their wellness journey.

New technologies are embraced quickly to advance the level of care that Desert Cardiovascular Consultants provides. For Dr. Khan, these breakthroughs are exciting and imperative to prevent unnecessary surgeries. “Cutting off problematic limbs is not always the answer,” he says. “Once blood carrying oxygen and proteins reach that area, it will come back to life. Modern treatments can improve outcomes, longevity, and quality of life, and we are eager to share them with every patient who walks through our door.”



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