

Saving Legs, Saving Lives

A significant number of amputations due to vascular diseases, such as advanced peripheral artery disease and critical limb ischemia, are unnecessary, resulting in reduced quality of life and even premature death. Meet the “leg savers” who are reversing this deadly trend.

Poor circulation is a common ailment, particularly among Americans 50 and older with a history of smoking, high blood pressure, diabetes, kidney disease, or family amputations.

Some patients experience leg pain or discomfort, but for most, the disease is silent—and progressive.

“Knowledge is power,” says Dr. Fadi A. Saab, co-founder of Advanced Cardiac & Vascular Centers for Amputation Prevention (ACV Centers). “The more we can educate both patients and providers about the risks of peripheral artery disease [PAD] and critical limb ischemia [CLI] and the new technology available to treat them, the more people will know they have options to preserve their limbs and their quality of life.”

BREAKTHROUGH TREATMENTS

Older therapies to correct poor circulation required invasive surgery and inpatient hospital admission.

Today, thanks to the pioneering efforts of Dr. Saab and practice co-founder Dr. Jihad A. Mustapha, minimally invasive technologies are now faster, more effective, and require no hospital stays.

“Using our signature procedures, we enter

a patient’s arteries through the ankle or foot. We then use advanced devices to break up blockages. Patients are usually able to walk just 45 minutes after the procedure, and the effects are immediate,” Dr. Saab explains. “The procedure is performed in our state-of-the-art outpatient center, where patients have potentially a lower exposure to COVID-19 and other illnesses.

“What was once considered science fiction is currently a reality,” he adds.

Drs. Saab and Mustapha are among the world’s leaders in developing the newest technologies to treat PAD and CLI. They work tirelessly to educate the general population as well as train physicians nationally and internationally in new, life-saving therapies.

DELAY CAN BE DEADLY

Amid COVID-19, many patients avoided treatment of chronic and acute health concerns, such as heart and vascular problems. That delay, however, has led to an uptick in critical cases that are beyond treatable with minimally invasive techniques.

In its most advanced stage, poor circulation is classified as CLI, which Dr. Saab describes as, in many cases, “a worse diagnosis than cancer.”

The message is clear: Don’t delay treatment for bad circulation, even amid a pandemic. Seeking treatment sooner rather than later, especially in the safe outpatient environment of ACV Centers, can be the difference between saving and losing a limb.

“We’re called the ‘leg savers’ because we’re passionate about helping patients avoid amputation,” says Dr. Saab. “In our opinion, saving a leg means saving a life. We urge all patients to seek a second opinion when they’ve been recommended an amputation. We’ve had patients come to us the day before a scheduled amputation, and we saved their limbs and maintained their independence to walk and take care of themselves and their family.

“Our life’s mission is to give people a second chance,” he concludes. “That, to us, is a privilege.”

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