

# Taking The Lead in Cardiac Care

Lead Removal Program, CT Angiograms Are Latest Upgrades



From left to right: Dr. Reginald Abraham; Lynn Redwater, Director of Cardiovascular Services; and Dr. Shankarlingam Sainath.

**“W**hen do I get to go home?” That’s what Lynn Redwater’s mother wanted to know when she was admitted to the hospital. Redwater, Director of Cardiovascular Services at Fountain Valley Regional Hospital, says her mother is typical of many patients. “They want to know, ‘What are you going to do, how are you going to fix it and when do I get to go home?’” Redwater says.

The cardiac care staff at Fountain Valley Regional Hospital is dedicated to

diagnosing and treating patients quickly. Redwater points to the hospital’s “door-to-balloon time” of 58 minutes in the fourth quarter of 2007, well below the 90-minute national standard. Door-to-balloon time measures how long it takes to get a cardiac patient from the front door of a treatment center to balloon angioplasty, a procedure that clears blocked arteries.

But speed isn’t the primary motivator. Accurate diagnosis and appropriate treatment are paramount. New technology is advancing both, while in

some cases also allowing procedures to be done faster and more safely.

An example is the new lead removal program at FVRH, which will be available in the early summer. Leads are wires that run from a pacemaker or other device implanted in the chest through a vein into the heart. Over time, scar tissue forms over the lead in the vein and where it attaches to the heart. In the past when a lead had to be removed—because the area around it became infected or a newer implantable device

was being installed—there was risk of heart damage.

Soon Arvind Nirula, M.D., an interventional cardiologist, will use a laser to burn off scar tissue so the lead can be pulled out easily without damaging heart tissue. Because the heart is still affected, however, cardiac surgeon Reginald Abraham, M.D., and a full surgical team are on hand.

“The laser frees up the lead along its course and at the point of final attachment to the heart,” says Dr. Abraham. “It’s a much safer, more effective way of removing leads.”

On another front, some cardiac angiograms at Fountain Valley Regional Medical Center are being performed with a new 64-slice computed tomography (CT) scanner instead of using traditional catheterization and X-rays. A cardiac angiogram is a diagnostic tool that shows how blood flows through your heart.

A CT scanner is less invasive and faster than the traditional method, but it should only be used in certain cases, explains Shankarlingam Sainath, M.D., a cardiologist at Fountain Valley Regional Hospital. “The CT angiogram is an excellent choice for diagnosing coronary artery blockages, evaluating heart muscle function and detecting congenital coronary anomalies,” he says. Congenital anomalies are defects people have when they are born.

Fast service, diagnosis and appropriate treatment—these are benchmarks for cardiac care at Fountain Valley Regional Hospital.

“We provide early diagnosis and treatment,” says Redwater. “Whatever your cardiac needs, we’re equipped, staffed and trained to treat it in a timely manner.”

To schedule a cardiac screening at Fountain Valley Regional Hospital, call **(714) 979-1408**.

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