Health Awareness

Minimally Invasive Endoscopic Vessel Harvesting For Bypass Surgery

(NAPSA)—If you or someone you care about has heart disease and needs to have open-heart surgery (also known as coronary artery bypass graft [CABG] or bypass surgery) to treat blocked arteries, there's another important procedure you should know about: endoscopic vessel harvesting (EVH), which nearly all (94 percent) U.S. hospitals are now performing, with more than 2 million procedures completed worldwide since 1996.

To prepare for bypass surgery, the clinician takes healthy blood vessels from other parts of your body and uses them to bypass the blockage in your heart. There are two main methods: the conventional open vein harvesting (OVH) technique, which requires a long incision along the leg that is often extremely painful and prone to healing complications, and EVH, which is performed via a minimally invasive technique requiring a single, small incision either in the leg or forearm. EVH has increasingly become the standard of care for CABG surgery given the significant clinical and cosmetic benefits without compromising long-term patient outcomes or safety.

In fact, studies show that compared to OVH:

1. EVH patients report less leg pain and scarring following the procedure.
2. EVH significantly reduces leg wound complications and infection.
3. EVH reduces the length of stay at the hospital.
4. EVH patients experience lower rates of hospital readmission and outpatient office visits.

"EVH is ideal for patients at greater risk for developing leg wound complications, such as patients with diabetes or obese patients," said Saurabh D. Ashier, PA-C, Surgical Assistant, Cardiothoracic Surgery, University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine. "Diabetes and obesity are on the rise in this country, which means an increasing proportion of bypass surgery patients are at high risk—so it's important now more than ever for hospitals, clinicians and their patients to recognize the value of EVH."

Doctors now offer minimally invasive EVH for bypass surgery patients.

EVH technology has continued to evolve to make the procedure easier, faster and more protective of the harvested blood vessel—ultimately contributing to more successful outcomes for the patient and fewer repeat surgeries to treat a new blockage.

"Advances in modern technology make it possible to perform EVH in ways that result in reduced pain and less scarring for the patient, while also leading to faster recovery, better clinical outcomes and enhanced patient satisfaction," explained Scot C. Schultz, M.D., McLeod Regional Medical Center, Florence, S.C. "As EVH becomes standard of care for reducing morbidity and improving patient satisfaction, it's critical that we continue to train even more clinicians on the proper techniques to minimize vessel injury and protect the harvested graft in order to ensure the patient has the best long-term outcome possible."

Learn more at www.myheartbypasssurgery.com.