Excellence in Care Guarding Against Sudden Cardiac Death

The Medtronic Intrinsic™ implantable cardioverterdefibrillator (ICD) is designed specifically to promote natural heart activity and reduce unnecessary pacing in the lower right chamber of the heart or ventricle.

A lot has been said lately of the dangers of Sudden Cardiac Death (SCD), the abrupt loss of heart function in a person who may or may not have diagnosed heart disease. In the January/February 2005 Healthy Living, “Sudden Cardiac Death, The Other Silent Killer,” explores the subject in alarming detail.A major concern in America, SCD causes approximately 340,000 deaths each year among adults – without being hospitalized or admitted to an emergency department.

The Electrophysiology Lab at Eisenhower Smilow Heart Center is committed to fighting this deadly condition and incorporates the latest technologies in implantable cardioverter-defibrillators, or ICDs, which have recently proven to be an effective guard against Sudden Cardiac Death.These stopwatch-sized devices monitor heart rates and send electronic shock waves to the heart whenever there’s a fast heart rate or a lethal heart rhythm.

On March 8, 2004, a landmark study known as the SCD-HeFT Sudden Cardiac Death in Heart Failure Trial), showed that ICDs reduced death by 23 percent in people with moderate heart failure and poor heart pumping function. Patients who have experienced heart failure are at greater risk of going into lethal heart rhythm.

In the past, the only patients who received defibrillators where those who had had an episode of Sudden Cardiac Collapse,” says Andrew M. Rubin, MD, Director of the Electrophysiology Lab at the Eisenhower Smilow Heart Center. “Now we consider anyone who has moderate-to-severe heart muscle weakness from any etiology as a potential candidate for an ICD.”

Earlier this year, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services announced that it would be expanding Medicare coverage of implantable cardioverter-defibrillators to include patients with heart failure and poor pumping function. Last year, approximately 180 Eisenhower Smilow Heart Center patients received an ICD.

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