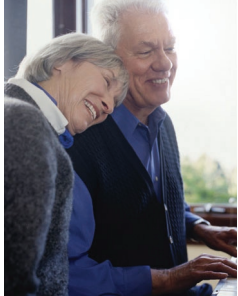




Catheter Ablation



heart rhythm services

Catheter ablation is a procedure that is used to cure abnormal heart rhythms. The procedure uses catheters—narrow, flexible wires—to detect and destroy electrical problem areas in the heart and restore normal electrical activity.

How does it work?

Catheters (Teflon-coated, flexible wires) are fed to the heart through a blood vessel in the groin. Electrodes in the tip of the catheter detect the faulty electrical site, and energy emitted from the tip of the catheter destroys (ablates) the damaged tissue. This energy comes in the form of radiofrequency heat to cauterize the site, or intense cold to freeze the site.

Why do catheter ablation?

Catheter ablation is an important part of the management of abnormal heart rhythms, especially for those patients whose arrhythmia cannot be controlled by lifestyle changes or medication. Ablation treats electrical problems in the upper chambers of the heart (atria) and, less frequently, the lower chambers (ventricles).

What are the benefits?

Catheter ablation has revolutionized the management of many common arrhythmias. It is a very effective procedure with success in 90-98% of cases. It eliminates the need for long-term drug therapy.

Is it safe?

Catheter ablation is performed by electrophysiologists—cardiologists who specialize in management of heart rhythm disturbances. This procedure was developed during the 1980s and has been standard therapy for many arrhythmias since 1990. Even the earliest reports from 1991 showed this procedure to be extremely successful with few complications (less than 1%). Patients typically are asleep and only report mild or no discomfort during the procedure.

What are the limitations?

Some arrhythmias, such as atrial fibrillation, are difficult to eliminate by ablation. These patients may do better with minimally invasive surgery (Mini-Maze).



In Affiliation with Sacred Heart Medical Center

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