Long-Term Care

Thoratec HeartMate II® Left Ventricular Assist Device

The HeartMate II® LVAD (made by Thoratec® Corporation) is currently approved to be used as Bridge to Transplant and as Destination Therapy. LVADs can support a patient for years without symptoms of heart failure. LVADs support the left side of the heart only.

The VAD Team At St. Peter’s

The VAD team at St. Peter’s is led by Dr. Niloo Edwards. Dr. Edwards has extensive experience in the treatment of patients with advanced heart failure (HF) and is an authority in the development of programs to address the special needs of elderly cardiac patients. Board-certified in surgery and thoracic surgery, Dr. Edwards specializes in the surgical treatment of end-stage heart disease.

A National Leader

St. Peter’s Cardiac & Vascular Center has been consistently recognized by independent healthcare quality researchers as one of the best cardiac programs in New York state and in the nation. Named a Blue Distinction Center for Cardiac Care, St. Peter’s continues to set the pace for health care innovations.

Contact Us

For more information about VADs or VAD surgery, contact St. Peter’s Hospital Advanced Heart Disease Center at (518) 525-5037. You may also contact St. Peter’s Chief of Cardiac and Vascular services, Niloo Edwards, M.D. at (518) 525-2525.
What is a Ventricular Assist Device (VAD)?

A ventricular assist device (VAD) is a surgically implanted device for people who have a weakened heart that needs help pumping blood. If your heart is too weak to pump sufficient blood, the VAD takes over much of the work. This allows the heart to rest and sometimes recover, while the pump helps supply the body with needed oxygen and vital nutrients. These devices DO NOT replace your heart — they help the heart.

Other benefits for the patient implanted with a VAD:
• Implanted devices are battery powered for ease of mobility
• Shorter hospital stay
• Return to a fairly normal life with the exception of contact sports and swimming
• Many return to work
• Less frequent heart failure admissions to the hospital

How VADs Are Commonly Used

Bridge to Transplant
A VAD may be implanted to temporarily support a heart failure patient while waiting for a heart transplant. As a “bridge to transplant,” a VAD can maintain normal blood circulation and reduce the chances of damage to your other organs while waiting for a donor heart to become available. The VAD is removed when your new heart is implanted.

Destination Therapy
If you are a heart failure patient who is not eligible for a heart transplant due to advanced age, smoking, cancer, or other health reasons, a VAD can be used as “destination therapy” for long-term support, instead of a heart transplant. Destination therapy can improve your quality of life and allow you to resume many regular activities in your normal surroundings.

Bridge to Recovery
If a patient’s heart failure is temporary, a VAD can be implanted for a few weeks or months to assist the heart during its recovery period. For example, if you are recovering from heart surgery, you may have a VAD implanted until your heart is strong enough to pump blood efficiently on its own, or as a “bridge to recovery.” The VAD is placed to support the patient until transplant, recovery, or destination therapy is initiated.

Types of VADs Offered at St. Peter’s Hospital

Short-Term/Emergent Care
Impella®
Thoratec CentriMag®

For people who develop sudden heart failure or acute cardiogenic shock, these VADs can be used to restore circulation to prevent damage to vital organs, like the brain, kidneys and liver. These devices may be placed during an emergency surgery or procedure. They also can be used to support a patient during high-risk open heart surgery.