

# Staying heart healthy – High-tech can help

## The heart of the matter

By Britney Porter

Improve your heart's health by increasing your awareness in the latest coronary technology. Cardiologists Dr. David Prewitt of Legacy Heart Center and Dr. Patricia Gum of HeartPlace talk to *Plano Profile* about stenting, screening, and scanning.

### Stenting

Coronary artery disease affects millions of patients each year, according to Dr. David Prewitt of Legacy Heart Center. Stenting is commonly used to treat it, and coronary stents have come a long way since the first one was implanted in a patient in 1986.

"For arteries with blockages that are more than 70 percent, various techniques to improve the blood supply have been developed," Prewitt said. "In the '80s and early '90s balloon angioplasty was the treatment of choice. This unfortunately has a recurrence rate of roughly 30 percent. In the early '90s, stents were developed to reduce this recurrence rate to approximately 15 percent."

Drug-eluting stents, which are only used for coronary arteries, were FDA approved in 2003. "The recurrence rates for drug-eluting stents are approximately 5 percent in most centers," said Prewitt.

The cause of recurrences is currently under study, but Prewitt assured that several drug coatings are being tested in clinical trials.

Dr. Patricia Gum of HeartPlace was the first cardiologist in Collin County to perform non-surgical *carotid* stent procedures. Carotid arteries are the two large arteries on each side of your neck

that carry blood to the brain and face.

Gum explained, "We place an IV in a leg artery, and through that IV we're able to pass catheters up to the neck arteries and then place stents. The majority of stents in the neck are metal alloy stents. This is the latest in the treatment of carotid artery stenosis."

Gum said that most of her patients prefer stenting as opposed to surgery. "There are certain patients that carotid stenting has shown to be superior than carotid endarterectomy, which is surgical treatment. Obviously, any procedure could be appropriate for



Van Nguyen, a registered technologist at Legacy Heart Center, performs a CAT scan on Brian Cummings using the new 64 slice Lightspeed Scanner.

some patients but inappropriate for others, so an evaluation needs to be done on a case-by-case basis."

### Screening and Scanning

Screening and scanning for signs of coronary disease may save your life. The American Heart Association (AHA) writing committee makes recommendations on screening for coronary disease.

Said Gum, "There hasn't really been any change in low-risk or in high-risk patients. In the intermediate-risk group – a calculation based on the Framingham Risk Score – you may consider coronary

calcium scoring. Coronary calcium scoring measures how much calcium is in the arteries."

Another way to receive prognostic information is to take a cardiac CAT scan. "It is different than coronary calcium scoring that just gives you a number," said Gum. "Cardiac CT gives you an image of the artery to estimate blockages, but per AHA writing committee recommendations it should not be performed as a screening test in patients who are not having symptoms."

Legacy Heart Center relies on its new 64 slice Lightspeed scanner to

diagnose at-risk patients. Legacy was the first private cardiology practice in North Texas to obtain the LightSpeed16 CT scanner, but recently upgraded to this new state-of-the-art technology. The scanner rotates around the body, capturing X-ray images, which are then sent to a computer and processed into 3-D images. The scanner also produces a heart

calcium score in seconds.

Said Prewitt, "With this technology we are able to acquire information that was previously only obtainable by inserting a catheter into the body, which requires a short hospital stay. Images can now be obtained in our office in as little as 45 seconds."

Now that's hard to beat!

*For more information on Legacy Heart Center, call 469-326-3400 or visit [www.legacyheartcenter.org](http://www.legacyheartcenter.org). For more information on HeartPlace, call 972-985-8838 or visit [www.heartplace.com](http://www.heartplace.com).*