

Introducing TAVR, a new way to replace heart valves



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If you could choose between traditional heart valve replacement surgery, or one that could be done faster with a faster recovery, which would it be? You now have both options right here at home.

TAVR – or Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement – is a groundbreaking procedure that allows doctors to replace heart valves through one small incision, avoiding the need for open-heart surgery. This incredible, non-invasive surgery is now available at the Erlanger Heart and Lung Institute.

Meet Erlanger's TAVR specialist, Dr. Matt Wiisanen

Recently, the Heart and Lung Institute announced the appointment of Dr. Matt Wiisanen, the region's only fellowship-trained structural interventional cardiologist and an expert at TAVR.

Dr. Wiisanen has been at the forefront of the TAVR procedure since it became available in 2012. Since that time, he has performed and assisted in hundreds of these valve replacement surgeries – more than any doctor or hospital in our region.

The benefits of TAVR surgery

As a structural heart specialist, Dr. Wiisanen has always been interested in providing non-invasive alternatives to open heart surgery. He was initially drawn to the TAVR procedure, because it allowed him to help more patients.

"In the past, doctors were unable to perform valve replacements for patients who were considered too high risk for surgery," says Dr. Wiisanen. "This procedure allows doctors to replace valves without opening the chest. This provides a great benefit to the patient, because there is less stress to the body."

Dr. Wiisanen also says TAVR patients benefit from less downtime. "While patients recovering from traditional heart valve surgery might be in the hospital for five or more days, most TAVR patients can expect to be released in two or three. In fact, they are often able to get out of bed and walk within six hours of the surgery. One of our patients was 100 years old at the time of her surgery. She enjoyed gardening, and didn't want a long recovery. After her procedure, she was able to return to her garden the very next season."

How the procedure works

During TAVR surgery, doctors insert a fully collapsible replacement valve inside the patient's damaged valve. It opens the old valve, similar to a stent, and then takes over the valve's operation. This TAVR replacement valve can be inserted through a simple incision in the groin or ribs using a catheter.

In some cases, a second catheter with a temporary pacemaker will also be used during the procedure. Most times, the pacemaker is removed right after the surgery.

Why the Erlanger Heart and Lung Institute

As a former resident of Fargo, North Dakota, you might expect Dr. Wiisanen moved to Chattanooga to enjoy the mild temperatures. While weather was certainly a factor, it was his passion for health care that brought him here.

"I have known Dr. Campbell, Erlanger's Chief Cardiologist, for years," says Dr. Wiisanen. "When we spoke about the Heart and Lung Institute, I grew excited because I knew I could make a difference in the community."

Dr. Wiisanen also says he likes the Heart and Lung Institute's highly collaborative approach. "When you do a TAVR procedure, a cardiologist and surgeon perform the surgery side-by-side. It's important to have a collaborative team, so you can ensure you are doing what's best for the patient. The doctors and specialists at the Heart and Lung Institute work together to ensure the best possible outcome."

The new Erlanger Heart and Lung Institute offers an elite team of cardiologists able to perform minimally invasive procedures with faster recovery and fewer complications. [Book an appointment](#) or call 423-778-5661, today.



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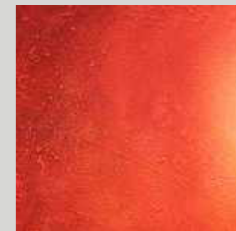
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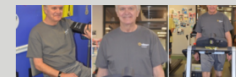
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