

LMC: Leading the Way in Stroke Care

Today, interventional neurologists are able to treat conditions such as stroke and brain aneurysms without making a single incision in the brain. Instead, they insert tiny tools through an artery — usually near the groin — and send them all the way up to the brain. Once there, they can remove a blockage to restore blood flow to the brain.

The surgeons need to be able to see inside the blood vessels to make sure they're not causing any damage to surrounding areas. Thanks to Lutheran Medical Center's commitment to stroke and neurological care, the hospital recently invested in a state-of-the-art machine that allows surgeons to do just this. It's called the neurointerventional biplane.

Two Is Better Than One

"The biplane machine contains two X-ray cameras that swivel around the patient taking two pictures at the same time instead of just one," says Jeffrey Farkas, M.D., director of interventional neuroradiology at Lutheran Medical Center. "With the two cameras, we get a three-dimensional view of the patient's vascular system." The images appear on flat screen monitors in front of the surgeon. "I use the monitors to see where

tools are and where the blockage is so I can move the tools in a way that carefully treats the problem without harming the patient," Dr. Farkas adds. The digital images also mean the surgeon can zoom in on certain areas on the screen for an even closer and more detailed look. With the press of a foot pedal, surgeons can take thousands of images during a typical three-hour-long procedural surgery.

Not only does the biplane machine make procedures safer and more precise, it also allows surgeons to use less dye during an

operation. "We inject contrast dye into the patient's blood stream so the blood vessels show up on the X-ray," Dr. Farkas says. "Since the biplane gives us more views with each image, we're able to use less, which is better for the patient." With advances in minimally invasive surgery plus biplane technology, patients experience faster recovery and improved outcomes.



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