

HEALTH

Fort Worthian first in Tarrant County to benefit from new heart procedure

by Kathryn Miller
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Medical City Fort Worth is the first hospital to perform a tricuspid valve repair in Tarrant County.

Mary Wilson wasn't sure if she would ever work in her yard again.

Wilson, 69, has dealt with heart complications since she retired about two years ago. The native Fort Worthian had shortness of breath and fatigued quickly.

Her doctors placed several stents in her heart. They also repaired her aortic valve. Yet, Wilson's symptoms persisted.



Mary Wilson is the first person in Tarrant County to benefit from a tricuspid valve repair, which aided the back flow in her heart valve.

Wilson and her doctors agreed she would benefit from a newly approved surgery to treat damaged heart valves. She was the first person in Tarrant County to undergo a percutaneous tricuspid valve repair, according to Medical City Fort Worth.

The tricuspid valve is one of four heart valves. Tricuspid valve disease occurs when the heart's tricuspid valve fails to close completely and blood flows in the wrong direction. Disease of the heart valves can lead to a multitude of complications, including heart failure, stroke, blood clots and death, according to [Mayo Clinic](#).

Wilson's tricuspid valve repair was performed at Medical City Fort Worth under its structural heart program. The procedure is considered a significant advancement in the medical community because it eliminates the need for open heart surgery, according to Medical City.

Wilson said she wasn't anxious going into the procedure, despite the surgery being a relatively new innovation.

"My faith was number one, and my trust in the team — I trusted them to know what to do and how to do it, and they didn't let me down," Wilson said.

The Food and Drug Administration cleared the procedure in 2024, said Mackenzie Cooper, valve specialist at the Medical City Fort Worth Structural Heart Program.

"Until this procedure came along, there was really no other therapy to fix the tricuspid valve besides cutting the chest open and replacing it," Cooper said.

The procedure was jointly performed by cardiologists Dr. Amir Malik and Dr. Karan Gupta. They used highly advanced technology utilizing sound waves to produce precise images.

Dr. Farhan Ali, the medical director of the Structural Heart Program at Medical City Fort Worth, was the first to discover Wilson's valve complications. He closely watched Wilson and monitored her heart and suggested ways to correct her complications as problems arose.

Ali suspected Wilson's problems were either from her mitral valve or her tricuspid valve. Doctors scanned her heart. The results were life-threatening.

"They saw the amount of back flow that her tricuspid valve was having," Cooper said.

Over the years, the leaking valve progressively worsened, Wilson said. That's when Ali presented her with the opportunity to undergo a brand-new procedure that would eliminate the need for open heart surgery.

"Of course I said yes," Wilson said. "I never considered going anywhere else for treatment. I always trusted my doctors, and I tried to go with what their recommendations were."

Medical City Fort Worth is building up its structural heart program. When completed, it will be the only comprehensive facility in Fort Worth to care for all parts of the heart.

"Medical City's ability to treat all major heart valves using minimally invasive techniques truly sets us apart, providing patients with systems of care that provide better outcomes and faster recoveries," Ali said.

Cooper hopes the hospital will continue to offer tricuspid valve repair to its patients, she said.

Wilson is now back to living an active and energetic lifestyle. She can't seem to find enough activities to do with her newfound energy and improved heart function.

"I can spend time out and about doing chores and errands without running out of breath and having to rush home and take a nap," Wilson said.

She can't wait to plant more flowers and watch them bloom.

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