



Local man first to get new heart procedure



Link to video: <https://youtu.be/zkFx4JvNoK8>

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HARRISBURG, Pa. (WHTM) – A lifesaving clinical trial is going on at UPMC Pinnacle, and a Lebanon County man is the first in the world to receive the benefits.

“When I first had problems, it was in 1990. I had open-heart surgery and five bypasses,” George Swartz said.

Six stents and a pacemaker later, the 72-year-old’s quality of life still had not improved.

“I had real shortness of breath. I couldn’t walk very far. I had to sit down and rest. I couldn’t do anything,” Swartz said.

“The hardest thing I’ve ever been through in my life was to watch my husband deteriorate every day,” said Louise Swartz, George’s wife.

“He had basically run out of options with regards to any kind of interventional management. No more stents or bypasses or medication management could improve his condition,” said Dr. Hemal Gada, a structural interventional cardiologist with UPMC Pinnacle.

Gada is George’s doctor. He entered George into a clinical trial.

“This is a clinical trial called CorCinch. It’s from a company called Ancora Heart, and the device and implementation technique is called AccuCinch,” Gada said.

A needle is inserted through the groin and used to secure small anchors to the inside of the heart muscle.

“We can then cinch that all together and make the actual cavity of the main pumping chamber of the heart less in volume, so it creates a more efficient state for the heart to function,” Gada said. “They have three different studies that are for this particular device and what Mr. Swartz is enrolled into was a specific population.”

“They said I was the first one worldwide to have this done,” George said.

Weeks later, George feels great.

“It gave me more blood through my body and helped me breath better,” he said.

“Due to this new procedure and the doctor’s care, I have my husband back again, and every day is just so precious and thank God every day,” Louise said.

“We were able to give him quality of life and hopefully restore even years of that quality of life as well,” Gada said.

Three different disease conditions are being targeted using the same device. The team is working on getting more patients into the UPMC Pinnacle trial.