

UCLA Cardiovascular Center uses team approach to providing innovative care



At the UCLA Cardiovascular Center, a collaborative, multidisciplinary team of specialists provides coordinated consultation and treatment to offer a full range of care, including the most advanced and innovative therapies available. Through this umbrella center, adult patients with valve disease, coronary artery disease, congenital defects, arrhythmias and all other forms of heart disease, can receive care in a single, convenient location.

Adult congenital heart disease

The Ahmanson/UCLA Adult Congenital Heart Disease Center was the first and is among the largest centers providing services to the growing number of adult patients with congenital heart disease. As a result of medical and surgical advances, most children born with congenital heart disease now reach adulthood, and there are more adults than children living with congenital heart disease in the United States today. In addition to providing the highest quality patient care, the Center is a major training and research facility. Working closely with UCLA pediatric specialists, the Center provides continuity of care as young patients transition from pediatric to adult life.

Care structured for patient convenience

“In addition to providing leading-edge, comprehensive care, we have made a commitment to providing prompt, convenient service by offering same-day appointments, a single phone number for scheduling and a centralized location where patients can be seen by multiple specialists in a single visit,” says Andrew Watson, MD, PhD, associate clinical professor of medicine/cardiology.

The UCLA Cardiovascular Center works with primary care physicians, cardiologists and other clinicians to provide coordinated outpatient and inpatient care. Patients are screened using state-of-the-art technology, including cardio-pulmonary exercise testing and gas exchange analysis, to help determine risk levels for subsequent cardiac events, explains Richard J. Shemin, MD, chief of cardiac surgery. The consultative group also provides highly specialized pre-op evaluation.

UCLA has been recognized as a top center in cardiovascular care by a variety of organizations, including *US News & World Report*, *Consumer Reports*, the Society of Thoracic Surgeons, the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Extracorporeal Life Support Organization.

Ahmanson-UCLA Cardiomyopathy Center

Ahmanson-UCLA Cardiomyopathy Center physicians provide comprehensive evaluation and the most sophisticated care, including advanced treatment options not widely available elsewhere. For example, UCLA has played a major role in the use of ventricular assist devices (VADs), often testing the newest devices before they are approved for general use. VADs can prolong the lives of patients with end-stage heart disease by serving as a bridge to heart transplantation or by providing long-term circulatory assistance to patients who are not candidates for transplantation, often due to advanced age or comorbidities.

UCLA is a leader in the field of heart transplantation. Since performing the first heart transplant in Southern California in 1984, UCLA cardiothoracic surgeons have performed more than 2,200 transplants, with survival rates that surpass international standards. UCLA physicians and researchers have also pioneered ways to expand the use of donor organs, making them available to more patients.

Advances in treating valvular heart disease

UCLA is among the top institutions in offering innovative treatment for valvular heart disease. It is one of the few centers performing a new transcatheter aortic valve replacement (TAVR) surgery, which avoids open-heart surgery and uses minimally invasive techniques to deliver a replacement heart valve. This procedure can provide effective treatment for patients who cannot have open-heart surgery and have few other options. UCLA cardiac surgeons are currently participating in trials of a new hybrid aortic replacement valve with a balloon-expandable frame that provides a less complex replacement procedure and could offer less invasive treatment to more patients with valvular heart disease.

Cardiac electrophysiology: treating heart arrhythmias

Some arrhythmias, or heart rhythm disturbances, can be controlled by medication, diet and lifestyle modification. Implanted devices, such as pacemakers and defibrillators, are sometimes necessary to maintain or restore normal heart rhythm. UCLA physicians also perform catheter ablation, a minimally invasive procedure that uses radiofrequency energy to destroy heart tissue responsible for disordered electrical signals. Cardiac electrophysiologists at UCLA have been able to help many patients with ventricular tachycardia, including those unsuccessfully treated with conventional ablation procedures at other hospitals. Electroanatomic mapping and robotic tools can be used to enhance the accuracy and flexibility of instrument movement during minimally invasive procedures.

At UCLA, success rates for treating both common and more complex arrhythmias are among the best in the nation.

Participating Physicians

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