

David Warner back at work after heart surgery.

Scanning for trouble

David Warner, 54 of Monticello, owes his life to medicine, its technology and a loving family.

In fact, after his father died of a massive heart attack at the age of 48, his own heart health was always in the back of his mind.

So when St. Luke's Hospital purchased a CT scanner (computed tomography) for cardiac imaging two years ago, it was his daughter Robin, who works in

St. Luke's Imaging Services, and his wife, JoAnn, a nurse for Cardiologists, L.C., who proposed David as one of the first patients for the scanner.

It was a good thing.

"What they found was startling," said David. "I had at least a 60 percent blockage."

Thanks to continuing advancements in cardiac testing, the CT scanner is the first dual-source CT system, which

incorporates two X-ray sources and two detectors into a single scanner. One of the main benefits of the scanner is its ability to help doctors diagnose heart disease. It provides a non-invasive way of seeing blockages in the arteries leading to the heart.

David reaped the benefits of this new technology, which is available only at St. Luke's. He was referred to Subhi Halawa, MD, Cardiologists, L.C., who told him to start a regimen of aspirin, niacin and fish oil for clot prevention and ordered a nuclear stress test to examine how the blockage affects blood flow to the heart.

The test came back normal with David running 13 minutes on the treadmill. But a few days later, he began having periodic chest pressure when he wasn't exerting himself.

At his wife and daughter's urging – David went back to Dr. Halawa for more testing.

Heart blockages found

On the morning of Dec. 6, 2007, David went to St. Luke's for a heart catheterization called an angiogram. Injecting an iodine-based dye into his veins, doctors threaded a long, thin, flexible tube called a catheter from the groin through the arteries to obtain an image of his vessels and heart at the point of the blockage.

The angiogram showed severe narrowing with an 80 percent blockage in the main artery that feeds the left side of the heart and a 90 percent blockage in another artery.

Mark Barnett, MD, a cardiothoracic surgeon with Physicians' Clinic of Iowa, P.C., was consulted and suggested two choices: either open the blockages with a procedure called angioplasty or perform open-heart surgery to bypass the blocked arteries.

Because the blockages were at the critical 'Y' intersection of two main arteries, Dr. Barnett recommended and David's family agreed that bypass surgery was the best option.

Open-heart surgery

At 3:30 p.m. that day, David had open-heart surgery lasting four-hours. He spent the next nine days at St. Luke's in a private room before going home, flew through seven weeks of cardiac rehabilitation, and today is back at work as parts manager at the John Deere store in Monticello.

"Sometimes detecting heart disease or blockages is not black and white," said Dr. Barnett. "Symptoms are highly

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Mark Barnett, MD, cardiothoracic surgeon
Physicians' Clinic of Iowa, P.C.



variable. So the CT scan is a useful screening tool for picking up heart disease in a patient who has a strong family history of coronary problems, but not a history of a heart attack or other major coronary symptoms. In David's case – it probably saved him from having a massive heart attack."

"The CT scan offers an additional way to look at the heart in a non-invasive way, and is especially helpful in detecting congenital abnormalities," said Richard Kettelkamp, DO, Cardiologists, L.C. "Heart disease is still the number one killer of people in the western hemisphere but because of advancements in technology and research, we've been able to decrease mortality by 25 percent in the last decade."

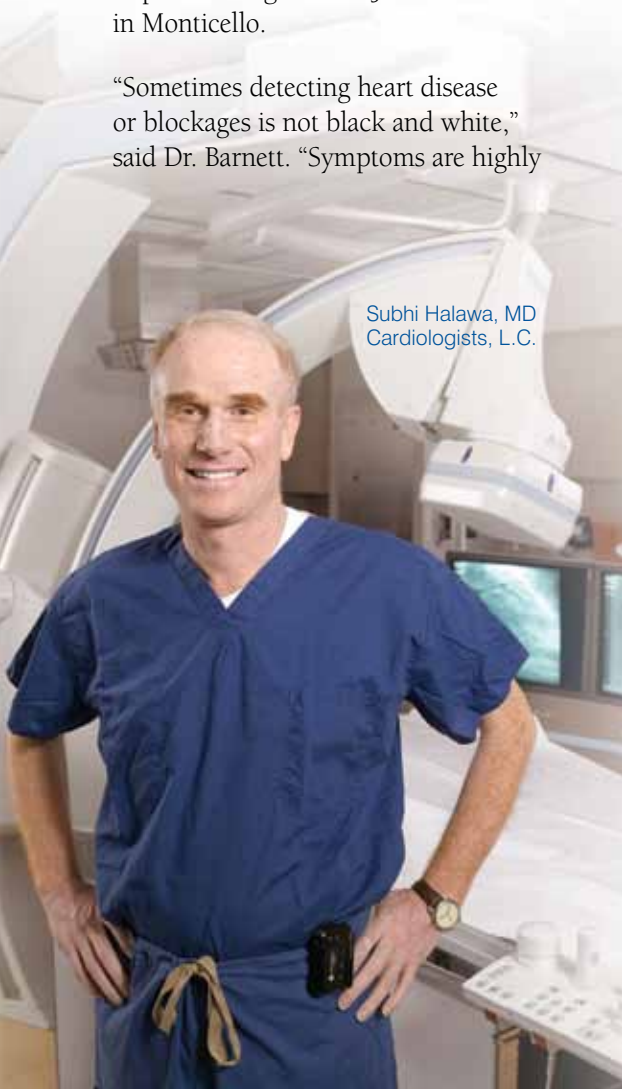
"I continue to take care of myself, watch my cholesterol, exercise regularly and make sure I go in for my regular six-month check-up," said David.

More importantly, adds his wife JoAnn, he was able to enjoy his son, Paul's, wedding, be there for the birth of his granddaughter, Ashlyn, who arrived this past September, and anticipate his daughter, Robin's, wedding next June.

"The care he received at St. Luke's was absolutely fabulous," said JoAnn. "I have the utmost respect for the St. Luke's staff. They're just wonderful."

■ To learn more about why St. Luke's is Cedar Rapids' Heart Hospital log on to stlukescr.org.

Subhi Halawa, MD
Cardiologists, L.C.



Check your health

Spend just seven minutes or less and take an online survey to find out more about your health. Log on to stlukescr.org and click "Check your health" to start one of several online assessments, including HeartAware. If you are determined to be at a higher risk you will be contacted or receive information on how to live a healthier lifestyle.