

BroadcastMed | New Stent Device Opens Blocked Arteries in Heart Patients

SPEAKER 1: What big news this afternoon. Research being conducted here in the Bay Area could provide a major advance for heart patients. Surgeons at John Muir Medical Center in Concord are implanting patients with a new kind of stent as part of the clinical trial. The difference is, this device not only opens blocked arteries, it also disappears when the job is done.

East-bay golfer Jeff Early can certainly read a green when the pressure's on. But several months ago a, different kind of reading threatened both his golf game and his health.

SPEAKER 2: I've had friends having stents, or bypasses, or actual heart attacks and I kind of wonder when my turn was going to come up.

SPEAKER 3: And right there, it's pinched about 70%.

SPEAKER 1: Doctors at John Muir Medical Center in Concord diagnosed a narrowing in one of Jeff's coronary arteries. The condition was severe enough that doctors recommended placing a stent. The mesh tubes have been available to open blocked blood vessels for several decades. But, a new type currently in clinical trials at John Muir includes a key difference.

SPEAKER 3: This is truly the most exciting area, right now, in interventional cardiology. And this is the first in class of these fully Bioresorbable Drug-eluting Stents.

SPEAKER 1: Interventional cardiologist, Dr. Gary Gershony says the device, known as Absorb, is placed in the artery with a balloon catheter in the same way as a common metal stent. As shown in this animation, provided by the manufacturer Bay Area based Abbott vascular, its coating can deliver an embedded drug to initiate the healing. But, unlike metal stents, the absorb is designed to dissolve away over the course of several years, leaving nothing in the body.

SPEAKER 3: We really only have a limited amount of real estate in our heart arteries. And, at some point, we don't want to be placing stent upon stent if we don't have to.

SPEAKER 1: We first profiled Absorb in 2010 when it was still in development at Abbott. Since then, it's undergone clinical trials in Europe and Japan. Dr. Gershony believes approval in the US would represent an evolution in cardiac care.

SPEAKER 3: And that would be, not leaving a permanent metallic scaffold inside of an artery.

SPEAKER 1: And since the trial is blinded, Jeff Early has not yet been told whether he received the absorb or a standard stent. He does know that the procedure has left him with the energy to pursue his passion.

SPEAKER 2: I can play 36 holes a day instead of 18, now. Maybe walk a few, too.

SPEAKER 1: The developers say the engineering behind the abbot stent has taken several decades to perfect. One of the key challenges was allowing it to be biodegradable while ensuring there is no flaking or breakage during that process.

SPEAKER 4: That's remarkable.