

## Do I have to live with atrial fibrillation?

### Dr. Michael Panutich responds:

You may not have to live with atrial fibrillation, the most common type of cardiac arrhythmia (abnormal heart rhythm).

If you have been diagnosed with atrial fibrillation, you do have options. Three possible treatment options include medications (anti-arrhythmic and/or blood thinners), a nonsurgical, catheter ablation procedure, or, in some cases, surgical ablation. The ablation procedure ablates, or destroys, the abnormal tissue areas in the heart and may prevent recurrences of atrial fibrillation. Ablative techniques have very low risk of complications, and may permanently eliminate symptoms.

The first step to determine which treatment may be right for you is to be evaluated by a cardiologist.

If you have been diagnosed with mild arrhythmia and your physician has advised you that treatment is not necessary, you may wish to obtain a second opinion. Additionally, it is crucial that you remain mindful of increases in symptoms such as heart palpitations, shortness of breath, dizziness, and chest pain, and promptly report any changes to your physician. Be aware that some patients have different symptoms than those listed above. It's important to seek out proper medical attention as atrial fibrillation can weaken the heart muscle and amplify your risk of heart failure and stroke.



### Meet Dr. Panutich

Michael Panutich, M.D. received his medical degree from New York Medical College and his internal medicine residency at Mayo Graduate School of Medicine. He completed a fellowship in cardiology at University of Chicago Hospitals and a fellowship in electrophysiology at University of California, San Diego. He is board-

certified in internal medicine, cardiology, and cardiac electrophysiology (a field devoted to the research and treatment of heart rhythm disorders – arrhythmia).

A new member of the Hoag Heart and Vascular Institute team, Dr. Panutich is helping to build the hospital's electrophysiology program. The program will offer a full range of treatments, including medications; pacemakers and defibrillators; and radiofrequency ablation, to treat the most therapy-resistant cases of arrhythmia.

"Heart rhythm conditions can be very complex," explains Dr. Panutich. "I am pleased to join Hoag Hospital and provide my patients with access to the latest state-of-the-art treatment options for complex arrhythmia conditions. It's my goal to provide my patients and the entire community with advanced care so each can maintain an active healthy lifestyle."

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Panutich, please call 949/548-9611.

Please join Dr. Panutich on November 12 for his presentation, "When Does Atrial Fibrillation Need to be Treated?" See page 9 for details.

## What are the latest treatment options for varicose veins?

### Dr. Todd Harris responds:

Varicose veins develop when faulty valves inside of veins do not function properly allowing blood to pool, pressure to build up, and veins to become weakened and enlarged. This can lead to aching in the legs, skin discoloration, itching, and irritation around the veins. If left untreated, it is possible for ulcers and blood clots to develop in the legs.

The latest treatment options use the heat of a laser, or radiofrequency energy, to scar and close off varicose veins. Microphlebectomy is a technique in which several tiny incisions are made in the skin to remove the varicose vein. Sclerotherapy is another procedure in which a chemical is injected into the vein causing the vein to close off. The procedure used depends on the size and location of the vein, as well as your health history. Little discomfort is associated with these minimally invasive procedures and most patients return to normal activity within one to two days.

Many insurance providers cover both the evaluation and treatment of severe varicose veins. This is especially true if symptoms persist without alleviation, despite conservative therapies, such as wearing compression stockings. However, it's important to check with your insurance provider to determine coverage prior to evaluation.



### Meet Dr. Harris

Todd Harris, M.D. received his medical degree from the Medical University of South Carolina and completed his residency at Saint Vincent's Hospital in New York City. He is board-certified in general surgery and completed a fellowship in interventional radiology.

Dr. Harris combines his skills in both general surgery and image-guided

procedures to tailor treatment plans to the individual patient. He also enjoys working with referring physicians to ensure continuity of care for patients.

"Providing comprehensive patient care is important, and although it is unique, I blend traditional general surgery with image-guided procedures to offer patients the most advanced, minimally invasive surgical options available," explains Dr. Harris.

Dr. Harris enjoys working with a diverse group of patients. "I treat a wide range of conditions, from varicose veins and hernia repair, to advanced liver cancer," says Dr. Harris. "It allows me to see a large variety of patients and is rewarding to help each with their individual concerns."

Dr. Harris is pleased to be affiliated with Hoag Hospital. "Hoag remains at the forefront of technology, enabling its medical staff to deliver the most advanced treatment options available," states Dr. Harris.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Harris, please call 949/221-0136.

Please join Dr. Harris on September 30 for his presentation, "The Latest in Varicose Vein Treatment." See page 8 for details.

## How is Traditional Chinese Medicine used to prevent and treat illness?

### Dr. Sheri Ho responds:

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) has been practiced for more than 2,000 years and is an intricate health care program based on the philosophy that energy imbalances in the body impede normal function. TCM uses a multidisciplinary approach, which includes acupuncture, herbology (medicinal herbs) and manual therapy (acupressure).

TCM is used to prevent and treat a wide range of conditions including hypertension, diabetes, acid reflux, insomnia, perimenopausal syndrome and allergies. Some physicians combine conventional Western Medicine with TCM, such as using Chinese herbs to treat hypertension and diabetes.

TCM emphasizes prevention by addressing energy imbalances in order to achieve optimal health. This is achieved through a holistic approach that stimulates the body's natural healing potential by treating root causes rather than just symptoms.

There are two major concepts in TCM that describe the balance of energy in the body. "Qi" refers to energy that flows along pathways in the body called meridians. TCM practitioners believe that if the flow of qi along these meridians is blocked or unbalanced, illness can occur. The other is the concept of "yin" (passive, supportive energy) and "yang" (bright, active energy). TCM uses yin-yang to describe and classify the human physiology and the pathology of illness.



### Meet Dr. Ho

Sheri Ho, M.D. earned a double major in Western Medicine and Chinese Medicine at China Medical University in Taiwan. Dr. Ho completed her residency at Loma Linda University Medical Center and is a graduate of Loma Linda's Family Medicine Program. She also earned a doctorate degree in endocrinology from University of California, Davis. Dr. Ho is board-certified

in family medicine and is licensed in acupuncture by the California Acupuncture Board.

Dr. Ho chose family medicine because she enjoys helping people of all ages with a wide range of health concerns. She combines Western Medicine with Traditional Chinese Medicine to provide her patients with a comprehensive holistic approach to health care.

"I enjoy providing my patients with personalized care and education that helps to improve the quality of their life," shares Dr. Ho. "It is very rewarding to partner with patients to positively affect their lives."

Dr. Ho chose to practice at Hoag because of the strong support available from the hospital and medical staff. "I am continually impressed by the level of care Hoag provides to my patients and the community," adds Dr. Ho.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Ho, please call 949/551-5152.

Please join Dr. Ho on October 22 for her presentation, "The Benefits of Traditional Chinese Medicine." See page 8 for details.