

Feb. 14, 2006: Health News Tips from Baptist Health South Florida

1. WILL STENTS WORK IN LEGS LIKE THEY DO IN THE HEART? Most people only think of heart attack or stroke when they think of circulatory disease. But the heart and its vessels are actually one system. And, plaque blockages in the legs are proven indicators of mortality from heart attack and stroke, in addition to being a major cause of lameness, wounds that won't heal and amputation. Unfortunately, angioplasty and stenting have never worked as well in the legs as they do in the heart. For one thing, a stent in a leg isn't buried deep inside the body, behind the rib cage, and is much more likely to get crushed, twisted and squeezed. Baptist Cardiac & Vascular Institute, a pioneer in treating peripheral vascular disease, recently began the first study of a new drug-releasing stent in the femoral artery above the knees. To speak to a doctor and patient, please contact Anne Smith asmith@baptisthealth.net 786-596-6654

2. BUSH APPROVES FREE MEDICARE SCREENING FOR A TICKING TIME-BOMB: Starting in 2007, at-risk groups entering Medicare at age 65 will get a free, one-time ultrasound screening for abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA), a silent, but dangerous bulging of the body's main artery that ruptures and kills 15,000 Americans every year. Patients under 70 typically have to wait for their aneurysm to grow to a dangerous size before undergoing grueling repair surgery. However, Baptist Cardiac & Vascular Institute helped organize the first national clinical trial of a less-invasive treatment, and our physicians currently are studying minimally-invasive devices it's hoped will be durable enough to protect even 60-70 year-old patients, without surgery, for the rest of their lives. To speak to a physician and patient, please contact: Anne Smith asmith@baptisthealth.net 786-596-6654.