OUR TEAM

Cardiovascular Surgeons

Juan Crestanello, MD
Associate Professor of Surgery
Clinical Interests: Adult cardiac surgery, minimally invasive surgery, robotic surgery, valve repair; aortic and aneurysm surgery

Robert Higgins, MD
Professor and Chairman, Department of Surgery
Director, Comprehensive Transplant Center; Director, Division of Cardiac Surgery
John H. and Mildred C. Luskey Medical Research Chair
Clinical Interests: Heart transplantation, adult cardiac surgery, coronary artery bypass surgery, mechanical circulatory support

Ahmet Kilic, MD
Assistant Professor, Division of Cardiac Surgery
Clinical Interests: Aortic surgery, heart transplantation, lung transplantation, heart failure

Chittoor Sai-Sudhakar, MBBS
Surgical Director, Left Ventricular Assist Device program; Associate Professor
Clinical Interests: Heart transplantation, cardiac mechanical assist devices, aortic surgery

John Sirak, MD
Assistant Professor of Clinical Surgery
Clinical Interests: Minimally invasive valve surgery, arrhythmia surgery

Vascular Surgeons

Michael Go, MD
Assistant Professor of Surgery
Clinical Interests: General vascular surgery, endovascular surgery

Jean Starr, MD
Director, Endovascular Services; Associate Program Director
Clinical Interests: Endovascular surgery, interventional procedures, vascular surgery, clinical trials

Patrick Vavcaro, MD
Director, Division of Vascular Diseases and Surgery; Chief of Staff, University Hospital; Program Director, Division of General Vascular Surgery
Luther M. Keigh Professor of Surgery
Clinical Interests: General vascular surgery, endovascular surgery, thoracic and abdominal aneurysms

Maria Litzendorf, MD
Vascular Surgeon, Assistant Professor of Clinical Surgery
Clinical Interests: Peripheral vascular disease, carotid disease, venous disease, abdominal and peripheral aneurysm disease

Mounir Joe Haurani, MD
Vascular Surgeon, Assistant Professor of Clinical Surgery
Clinical Interests: Thoracic, abdominal, and peripheral aneurysms, carotid disease, Upper and lower extremity venous, obstructive disease, carotid disease, peripheral vascular disease, complex endovascular revascularization and IVC filter retrieval and placement

The Ohio State University Medical Center Heart and Vascular Center

The Aortic Center

- A new center for patients with thoracic aortic aneurysms and related thoracic aortic conditions
- Combined expertise of vascular surgeons, cardiac surgeons, anesthesiologists and cardiologists who provide a multidisciplinary approach to individualized care
- Ready for even the most complex cases with the latest in imaging and procedural technology, including open and endovascular techniques
Thoracic aortic aneurysms is generally a quiet phenomenon that is often discovered on unrelated imaging studies. Symptoms are relatively rare until the aneurysm reaches a certain size, after which complications such as acute rupture or dissection may occur. Treatment of thoracic aortic aneurysms and related thoracic aortic conditions is complex, involving the management of many co-morbidities and disease states. Though complication and mortality rates are relatively high, outcomes are significantly improved when patients are treated at a center that offers the expertise of a multidisciplinary team with extensive experience in the latest technological advances.

Ohio State’s Aortic Center is dedicated exclusively to the management of thoracic aortic conditions. Patients benefit from the combined expertise of vascular surgeons, cardiac surgeons, cardiologists and anesthesiologists who specialize in the latest techniques and technologies for the treatment of thoracic aortic conditions. “We treat the aorta, from the aortic valve to the groin,” says Chittoor Sai-Sudhakar, MBBS, surgical director of the Left Ventricle Surgical Device program. “We have very specialized teamwork, from vascular surgeons to dedicated cardiovascular anesthetists to cardiac surgeons. This has enabled us to expand our program and offer more advanced techniques such as the thoracic endograft procedure.”

Ohio State’s Aortic Center provides the most advanced care for patients with disease processes that affect the descending thoracic aorta. Our services include:

- Comprehensive evaluation by a dedicated team of cardiologists, vascular surgeons and cardiac surgeons trained in both open and endovascular repair
- Ongoing consultation and monitoring of patients with descending thoracic aortic disease, including those with connective tissue disorders such as Marfan syndrome
- A research and education program that supports the development of new knowledge and therapeutics for this complex patient population

Because of the tenuous nature of aortic conditions, having an Aortic Center in the area presents an outstanding benefit for your patients. “Ohio State has the technical expertise of senior surgeons who are intimately involved with every case, unique imaging capabilities, including the ability to perform hybrid procedures, and an integrated, multidisciplinary team that provides life-saving care in a compassionate environment,” says Patrick Vaccaro, MD, director of the Division of Vascular Diseases and Surgery.

Ohio State’s Richard M. Ross Heart Hospital is ranked one of the top 25 hospitals in U.S. News & World Report, and our nursing staff recently won the Beacon Award for Critical Care Excellence.

INNOVATIVE TECHNIQUES RESULT IN BETTER OUTCOMES FOR HIGH-RISK PATIENTS

Operations on the thoracic aorta carry significant risk of complications, including paraplegia and mortality. We perform a specialized technique that involves lowering the patient’s body temperature to preserve organ function while our cardiac team initiates cardiac arrest or left atrial bypass. “The ancillary bypass techniques provided by our cardiac surgeons affords additional spinal cord protection, further reducing the risk of paraplegia conferred by spinal cord drainage alone,” says Dr. Vaccaro.

Ohio State provides both conventional open and endovascular techniques for patients with conditions of the descending thoracic aorta, including:

- Aortic valve-sparing surgery
- Homograft root replacement
- Bentall aortic root replacement
- Replacement of ascending aorta
- Hybrid elephant trunk procedure
- Thoracic endograft techniques

Concurrently, Ohio State’s vascular surgeons have developed expertise in endovascular grafting for descending thoracic aortic aneurysms, an approach that intrinsically lowers morbidity and mortality. “With the advent of hybrid operations, which combine both endovascular and open repair, operations can be offered to patients with aneurysms of the ascending aorta and arch in whom purely open procedures had previously been denied due to risk,” explains Dr. Vaccaro.

Vascular and cardiac surgeons performed the first debranching procedure at Ohio State, a hybrid procedure combining open and endovascular techniques to bypass the brachiocephalic vessels with open surgery to place a stent graft from the ascending aorta to the descending aorta through the aortic arch.

ADVANCED IMAGING TECHNOLOGY OFFERS BEST DIAGNOSTIC STRATEGY FOR PATIENTS

Thoracic aortic aneurysms have an estimated annual incidence of 10.4 per 100,000 patient years, with an incidence of rupture or dissection of 3.5 per 100,000 patient years. Advanced cardiac imaging is capable of detecting more and more of these, allowing for earlier treatment and improved survival rates. “Everything is housed under one roof at Ohio State’s Richard M. Ross Heart Hospital,” says Dr. Sai-Sudhakar. “We have 24-hour availability of our imaging facilities. We also have MRI and CT scan technology plus catheterization labs to perform the coronary angiograms that we need.”

In addition, the Aortic Center features an advanced endovascular room, with plans to install a hybrid operating room in the coming year. “We have the ability to do hybrid procedures,” shares Dr. Vaccaro. “We have an operating room equipped with radiographic devices where we can actually do angiograms on the table. This type of technology allows us to perform both open procedures and stent grafts in the same setting.”

COMPREHENSIVE CONSULTATION IS JUST A PHONE CALL AWAY

Specialists at Ohio State’s Aortic Center are always available for consultation. We provide timely transport, evaluation, treatment and comprehensive follow-up for your patients. “We will talk to referring physicians about individuals with any aortic pathology that needs evaluation or treatment,” says Dr. Sai-Sudhakar. “If needed, we can bring them in emergently.”

In combination with Nationwide Children’s Hospital, Ohio State’s Aortic Center has a large database of patients with Marfan syndrome. The Aortic Center offers genetic testing and follow-up for family members.

How to refer patients... For referrals to Ohio State’s Aortic Center or information about our services, call 855-204-1200 and ask for the surgeon on-call.