



(L to R): John Estill, Sue Raber, RN and Terry Schenck

The heart is an amazing organ. Every 60-seconds it pumps about five quarts of blood through a system of vessels that if stretched out, would be over 60,000 miles long. It beats about 100,000 times a day and continues its stealth but steady work day and night.

Aging or heart disease can damage your heart's ability to regulate its pace. "A problem with the heart's natural pacemaker or the wires carrying the impulses can cause a slow heart rate and can be a sign that your heart needs a little help," said Sue Raber, RN, who has managed the Cardiac Device Clinic at the Wooster Heart Group since 2013. Sue is specialty trained in defibrillators and pacers and her expertise ensures that area residents no longer have to go out-of-the-area for pacemakers, implantable cardioverter

defibrillators (ICDs) and follow-up care.

These implantable devices need follow-up care, said Sue. "One to two weeks after the device is implanted, patients need to return for an incision and device check and for follow-up instructions. Every three to six months after that, the devices need to be routinely checked so adjustments can be made, if necessary.

"We offer these services five days a week," said Sue. "Patients have the choice to be seen personally or we can monitor their devices remotely using a box that transmits information from their pacemaker to a secure website through cellular towers or WIFI. We check the devices to ensure proper function and to optimize for the patients needs."

And Terry Schenck, of Wooster, is sure glad the Cardiac Device Clinic was there for him this past

year. Without the pacemaker Dr. Cyril Ofori implanted into his chest last year, he's pretty sure he wouldn't have lived to see the new year.

Terry, age 67, who has a history of longevity in his family, noticed his heart rate kept going down during the fall and he was feeling dizzy. When his heart rate decreased to 30 beats per minute he called Dr. Paul Moodispaw's office and they scheduled a visit. A few hours later they called him back. "We need to see you tomorrow," he recalled them saying.

They scheduled surgery for a pacemaker to be implanted by Dr. Ofori. Terry had the surgery and went home the next day. "Terry was a good candidate for a pacemaker because pacemakers generally treat slow heart rates or uncontrolled heart rates," said Dr. Ofori.

"Immediately I felt great," Terry said. "It was just a 45-minute procedure under local anesthesia. I was awake and joking with the staff before and after the procedure." Four days later, it was no laughing matter.

Terry and his wife were enjoying seafood at an area restaurant when he had an allergic reaction to the seafood. "I was shaking, started swelling up and had hives all over." He went straight to the ER at WCH, where they diagnosed his allergic reaction and treated him. His blood pressure had dropped. "If I didn't have the pacemaker in, I don't think I would be alive today," he said. "The pacemaker kept my heart rate up until I could recover." He is very grateful to Dr. Moodispaw for recognizing his heart problem and getting him sorted out.

Today, Terry is back to feeling great and taking care of his 15-acre farm. Chopping wood, mowing and acting as a handyman for a nearby veterinarian is his "workout plan. I don't do treadmills," he said. "I'll never use one, but I do enjoy keeping in shape working on the farm. I hope to go through quite a few more (pacemaker) batteries."

John Estill of Millersburg is another patient who is grateful for the acute heart care he was able to receive locally. The retired systems analyst felt great until he hit his 60's. "Then my health started going downhill," he said. He was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in 2001 and shortness

of breath followed. A longtime smoker, he gave up smoking and did fairly well until a heart catheterization in 2003 revealed stenosis in his heart passageways. He had quadruple bypass surgery in 2003 and continued to be monitored over the next few years by Dr. Ofori.

In 2015, Dr. Ofori, who noticed John's "heart muscle was very weak after his heart attack and bypass surgery," suggested it was time for an implantable cardioverter-defibrillator (ICD). Two bouts of pneumonia finally convinced John to get the implant. He had it implanted locally by Dr. Emile Daoud from The Ohio State University. Dr. Daoud is Chief of Electrophysiology at OSU and collaborates with the Wooster Heart Group physicians. He has been implanting defibrillators at WCH for more than seven years.

"Defibrillators can do all that pacemakers do and more including shocking people out of life threatening rhythms" said Dr. Ofori. "They serve as your personal CPR and are most helpful in people who have a weak heart muscle."

"There is a sense of security in knowing it's there," John said. "I appreciate that Dr. Ofori is proactive and watching out for me. I have a great relationship with him. We're on a professional but friendly basis, which I like."

John's advice to others today is "If you don't smoke, don't start and if you notice symptoms, get it checked out. Don't think it will

never happen to you. If it does, thank goodness care is close by."

"Being able to treat acute heart problems locally prevents people from having to drive to Akron or Canton," said Sue, who came to the clinic with more than 20 years of cardiac device experience. "We run a full service pacemaker defibrillator clinic here and also collaborate with The Ohio State University."

Currently, Sue is monitoring hundreds of heart patients and has seen the number of patients tick up considerably since 2013. "We are the only facility offering these services locally since the Cleveland Clinic stopped their service. Devices have become an important part of treatment of heart disease and they have improved the lives of hundreds of area residents."

For more information contact  
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