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NEW MINIMALLY INVASIVE HEART VALVE SURGERY

Faster recovery, with much less pain and without the unsightly scar of open-chest surgery

Are you or someone you love preparing for a heart valve procedure? You'll be glad to hear that heart valve surgery doesn't always involve a large chest incision and a painful lengthy recovery. Cardiothoracic surgeons at Boulder Community Hospital offer a less-invasive approach called Port Access valve surgery. Surgeons repair or replace heart valves through a small incision between the ribs, offering several important advantages:



- **Faster recovery** — Patients usually return to regular activities and even return to work within two to three weeks; conventional open-heart patients must wait six weeks or more for their breastbones to heal.
- **Far less pain** — Port Access eliminates the trauma and post-surgical pain associated with movement that accompanies a large breastbone incision. In fact, Port Access patients often require little or no pain medicine upon returning home.
- **Dramatically less scarring** — The incision is much less noticeable than the scar from conventional surgery. This is particularly appealing to those who wish to continue wearing low-neckline clothing after surgery. For many women, the Port Access scar is underneath the breast and almost unnoticeable.
- **Shorter hospital stays** — Port Access reduces the average hospital stay from 7-10 days to just 3-5 days. Patients require little assistance for their personal care.
- **Effective repairs and replacements** — Surgeons find that Port Access provides superior visualization of and access to the mitral valve. As a result, mitral valve repair or replacement can be performed effectively.

[Click here](#) to see a report on Port Access surgery that appeared on Denver's Channel 4 News.

“Between-the-ribs” heart surgery

In conventional heart valve surgery, surgeons reach the heart by cutting the chest open from top to bottom and “sawing” the breastbone (sternum) in half. This traumatic open-chest procedure, called a sternotomy, usually leaves the

patient with a 7-10 day hospital stay, painful 2-3 months of recovery, and a 10-15 inch disfiguring scar on the chest.

The new Port Access surgery is a radical departure from this traditional approach. There is no sawing of bones required. Instead, surgeons make a small 3-4 inch cut — or “port” — between the ribs, and peer through the ribs to fix the valve. Many call it closed-heart surgery.

The Port Access Difference

Questions and Answers

1. What types of problems are treated?

Minimally invasive Port Access surgery is applicable to:

- Mitral valve repairs or replacement
- Aortic valve replacement



2. Who is a candidate for minimally invasive heart surgery?

Your cardiothoracic surgeon will review the results of your diagnostic tests to determine whether you are a candidate for the minimally invasive surgery. The surgeon will carefully weigh the advantages and disadvantages of minimally invasive surgery against traditional surgery.

3. How does the heart-lung machine connection differ between Port Access and conventional open-chest heart surgery?

With traditional heart valve surgery, the chest is cut open in order to insert tubes into the blood vessels around the heart. These tubes connect the patient to an external heart-lung machine that completely takes over the functions of the heart and lungs, letting the doctor temporarily stop the heart. With the heart still and quiet, surgeons can operate on the valve.

Port access also allows doctors to put a patient on a heart-lung machine, but the tubes are placed in the groin and the neck and then threaded through the vessels until they reach the heart. Once the patient is connected to the heart-lung machine, surgeons operate on the heart using the same techniques applied during traditional, open-chest heart surgery.

4. What are the risks associated with the less invasive Port Access valve surgery?

All major surgeries have the potential for complications. Only your doctor can determine your risk factors and help you weigh the risks and benefits of a given procedure.

5. Why choose BCH?

BCH is the first hospital in Colorado to offer this remarkable chest-sparing heart surgery. An expert team works collaboratively to ensure a seamless surgical and rehabilitation experience for all Port Access patients:

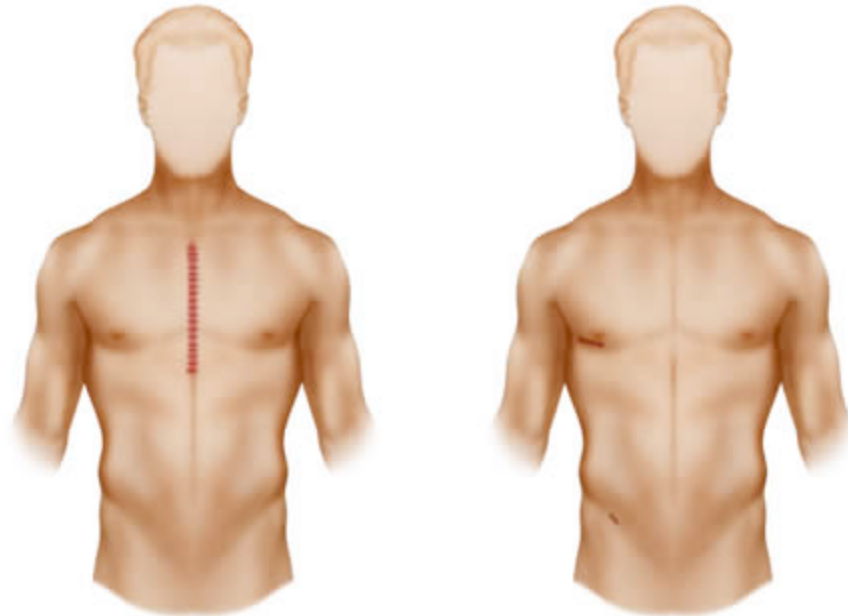
- **Specially trained surgical team** – Dr. Thomas Matthew and Dr. Mark Douthit of Boulder Valley Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery are the first surgeons in Colorado to perform Port Access surgery.

These BCH surgeons are assisted by a specially trained team, which includes an anesthesiologist, perfusion technologist, and other specially trained medical professionals.

- **Specialized, state of the art facilities** – BCH has a specially equipped cardiac surgical suite, dedicated cardiac intensive care rooms, a telemetry-monitored patient care unit and a full-service rehabilitation facility.

Incisions

Conventional surgery involves a large, painful chest incision (left). Less-invasive approach results in a small incision between the ribs (right).



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