

Media Contact: Debbie Bolles  
214-648-3404  
[debbie.bolles@utsouthwestern.edu](mailto:debbie.bolles@utsouthwestern.edu)

## UT Southwestern scans first North Texas patient with MRI-safe pacemaker

DALLAS – July 7, 2011 – A patient at UT Southwestern Medical Center with a newly designed pacemaker has become the first in North Texas to undergo a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan.

Alan Thompson, 43, of Forney, underwent the MRI at UT Southwestern to determine if he had a recurrence of spinal cancer. Because the magnetic fields of MRI scans can disrupt a pacemaker's operation, patients with conventional pacemakers typically don't get the scan. While pacemaker patients can be safely scanned by other means – such as computed tomography (CT) scans – MRIs are the most detailed and best diagnostic tool for certain medical conditions.

“Having the MRI results took the burden off me I'd had for the last year and a half,” Mr. Thompson said. “I feel absolutely reassured that the cancer hasn't returned and I'm relatively healthy at this point.”

With the MRI results, the consensus of his doctors, including Dr. Howard Morgan, professor of neurological surgery at UT Southwestern, was that Mr. Thompson's leg weakness seemed to be related to nerve damage from radiation treatment he received for spinal cancer at another medical facility long ago.

His new pacemaker – the Revco MRI SureScan, from Medtronic – is the first MRI-conditional device available in the United States. The device received Food and Drug Administration approval in February. The wire leads that connect the pacemaker to the heart are made to reduce or eliminate magnetic interference. Just prior to an MRI, the device is programmed for safe-scanning mode.

“This is a huge benefit for patients because there are so many conditions where MRI is the best detection tool,” said Dr. Ron Peshock, a cardiologist and professor of radiology and internal medicine.

Because of the high demand for MRIs, Dr. Peshock said the new pacemakers most likely will become the norm as conventional pacemakers phase out. In the meantime, radiologists must receive special training to run MRI scans on patients with Revco pacemakers.

“I'm absolutely open to new technologies,” said Mr. Thompson, a materials scientist at Marlow Industries of Dallas. “Patients should do their homework and be diligent about looking for new options.”

Dr. Peshock said the first North Texas scan of an MRI-conditional pacemaker patient required

(MORE)

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collaboration of UT Southwestern doctors from various specialties – radiology, cardiology, electrophysiology and medical physics – along with Mr. Thompson's other Dallas-area doctors and Medtronic.

Visit <http://www.utsouthwestern.org/heartlungvascular> to learn more about UT Southwestern's clinical services in heart disease. Visit <http://www.utsouthwestern.org/radiology> to learn more about UT Southwestern's clinical services in radiology.

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