

HealthSouth's Enhanced External Counterpulsation



If you or someone you know is among the more than seven million people in this country who suffer the crippling chest pain of angina pectoris, you should know about the Enhanced External Counterpulsation EECP therapy program at HealthSouth Sarasota.

General Information

The term Enhanced External Counterpulsation (EECP) describes what happens during treatment. “Enhanced” refers to the state-of-the-art technology that has developed during decades of research and is used for EECP treatment today. EECP treatment is “external” because it happens outside the body and does not require surgery or other invasive procedures. Counterpulsation occurs when the heart is at rest.

When patients have angina, their heart is telling them that it is not receiving enough oxygen. A treatment, in harmony with a patient’s heart, can improve circulation to the heart muscle. After EECP treatment, patients may find that they can:

- Walk farther; carry heavier packages and be more active without having angina
- They have fewer attacks of angina

- Their episodes of angina are less intense
- They need less anti-angina medication
- They can return to work, go out to dinner, garden and travel, or enjoy golf, tennis or bowling once again
- They no longer restrict their social lives, volunteer activities, or exercise because they aren’t worried that angina symptoms may occur
- EECP is intended to help people who suffer from angina

Invasive procedures sometimes fail, pose risks and are very expensive. EECP therapy provides an alternative for those people who cannot be treated effectively with medication or are unsuitable or are unwilling to undergo invasive procedures.

Patient Criteria

To determine if you are an appropriate candidate for EECP treatment, you should be evaluated by your cardiologist or family practice physician. Candidates for EECP treatment may include:

- Patients with chronic stable angina
- Patients for whom nitrates are not providing adequate relief from angina
- Patients who do not qualify for invasive procedures for angina

- Patients who have exhausted invasive treatments without lasting relief of symptoms
- Patients who are unwilling to undergo surgery or angioplasty
- Some patients with ischemic systolic left ventricular dysfunction

For many patients, EECP treatment can provide relief without pain or time for recovery. EECP treatment is administered in the outpatient setting. The procedure has little or no risks and is relatively comfortable.

Typical Course of Treatment

A typical course of treatment requires patients to attend one-hour treatment sessions once a day, five days a week, for seven weeks. Many patients have continued working during the course of treatment by scheduling early morning or late afternoon appointments. Some patients may require more than 35 hours of treatment to achieve optimal benefit.

Because each person’s condition is unique, there is no predictable point during treatment when you will feel an improvement. Experience has shown, however, that many patients tend to report some improvement in their

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condition after as few as 10 to 12 treatment sessions, although it may take longer. EECP may also be repeated if angina symptoms reoccur.

Benefits

- Elimination or decrease in exercise-induced signs of lack of oxygen to the heart muscle (ischemia)
- Increased exercise tolerance
- Elimination or decrease in episodes of chest pain
- Decrease in need for anti-anginal medication

For many patients, EECP treatment can reduce the frequency of chest pain or eliminate it altogether, decrease the need for medication, and greatly improve the ability to participate in activities of everyday life. After receiving EECP treatment, patients often are able to enjoy moderate exercise for the first time since they developed angina.

Referral Process

HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital welcomes anyone whose quality of life has been compromised by an illness or injury. A free assessment of the patient's rehabilitation needs will be provided to determine appropriateness for the EECP program. Most insurance companies cover our services. For more information call 941 921-8683.



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Rehabilitation Hospital of Sarasota

6400 Edgelake Drive • Sarasota, FL 34240
941 921-8600

healthsouthsarasota.com