

Comfortable and Catheter-Free

Aquablation therapy for an enlarged prostate transforms a patient's life.

For the past four years, the only way that 77-year-old Ernesto Sales found relief from an enlarged prostate gland was through a surgically implanted catheter, which needed to be replaced every six weeks. Sales had been fearful of prostate surgery, and although the catheter was uncomfortable, the retired shipping-and-receiving clerk felt he had no alternative.

But that was before Faisal Ahmed, MD, a urologist at Providence Little Company of Mary Medical Centers San Pedro and Torrance, suggested an advanced solution: Aquablation therapy, a minimally invasive surgery that uses a high-pressure water beam to remove parts of the prostate. After an extensive consultation, Sales agreed to the procedure, and in November 2021 he was the first patient to undergo Aquablation surgery at Providence Little Company of Mary.

"We made a commitment to this new technology because we knew it would be good for patient care," says Dr. Ahmed. We have become one of the busier centers in Southern California offering Aquablation therapy."

At Providence Little Company of Mary, we adopt the latest, transformative technology to enhance our patients' care and treatment experience. From pioneering research to clinical trials, our specialists continually evaluate medical advances and embrace those that benefit our patients.

Prostate disease is an area that has benefited from innovation. Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH) is a noncancerous condition in which the prostate gland becomes enlarged, which causes obstruction of urine from the urethra. The condition, common in men over 50, causes urinary frequency, difficult urination and incomplete bladder emptying. If left untreated, BPH can cause kidney dysfunction, urinary tract infection, bleeding and bladder stones.

According to Dr. Ahmed, Aquablation is "the next evolution" of traditional noninvasive procedures like transurethral resection of the prostate (TURP), which uses a loop of wire

and electrical current to remove prostate tissue. "Unlike TURP, Aquablation is a robotic procedure," says Dr. Ahmed. "It uses 3D ultrasound guidance as well as preplanned computerized motion with a high-pressure water beam, all under the surgeon's skillful eye. We can control how much tissue we cut very precisely, down to the millimeter, so we have a nice, continuous channel."

The procedure also takes less time, which means less stress and better recovery for our patients. "The surgeon can do 10 times more work in one-tenth the time, with better results," he says.

Dr. Ahmed explains that, unlike other procedures, Aquablation can be used to treat larger prostate glands, with excellent outcomes and fewer complications. "Ideally, it's suited for patients who are failing medication and have larger prostates," he says, "but it can be used on smaller glands as well. This is a very broad technology suited for almost anyone with an enlarged prostate."

At first, Sales was hesitant to undergo Aquablation. "I was afraid to take the gamble," he says. "What if I had the surgery and it didn't work, or the surgery made my problem worse?" But Dr. Ahmed took the time to explain everything very clearly and gave Sales the reassurance that this procedure was the right treatment option.

Sales's Aquablation procedure was successful, and he is now catheter-free. "I can urinate normally again, without feeling like my bladder isn't completely drained," says Sales. "I feel like a new person."

"Dr. Ahmed is not just good, he's one of the best," says Sales. "The anesthesiologists and the entire team at Providence did a professional job, together with the nurses who helped me recover. Afterwards I asked Dr. Ahmed, 'Do you think this will last me another two or three years?' and he said, 'This will last you another 10 years.'"

Sales currently lives in Long Beach with his wife and extended family. He enjoys listening to popular music, from Frank Sinatra to the Beatles and beyond. "My friends say my love of music is why I look much younger than my 77 years," he says.

Sales is also intent on spreading the word about Aquablation. "I want the world to know about Dr. Ahmed and everyone at the hospital. After the surgery, during my follow-up visit, I was so happy I was crying. I said, 'Doctor, I want to hug you.' And you know what? He hugged me." ●

For more information on treatment for benign prostatic hyperplasia, call 844-925-0942.