

Keeping watch

Watchman procedure helps prevent strokes in people who can't use blood thinners

Run time - :37

ANCHOR LEDE: September is Atrial Fibrillation Awareness Month.

Atrial fibrillation, or AFib, is when the heart's rhythm is irregular. Electricity in the heart's atrium is also disorganized. All of this brings a big increase in the risk of suffering a stroke. Tim Ditman of OSF HealthCare tells you more.

~~~

A blood-thinning medication will do the trick long-term. But blood thinners aren't for everyone.

Luckily, medicine has found an answer to this problem by way of a Watchman implant.

OSF cardiologist Doctor Abraham Kocheril:

**\*\*\*SOUNDBITE\*\*\***

**Dr. Abraham Kocheril [COACH-er-ull], OSF HealthCare cardiologist**

**"There's very little to recover from in the atrium because we're not doing any cutting. It's just a plug going into the appendage. But there is a healing process there. Your body grows tissue over the device. The idea is as that tissue grows, the Watchman is completely sealed. It's as if there's no pouch there at all." (:21)**

I'm Tim Ditman.

~~~

ANCHOR TAG: You should know the signs of AFib. If you feel your heartbeat is irregular or if you have sudden fatigue, see a health care provider. Your smart watch may also track heart rhythm, although Doctor Kocheril cautions not to rely on that alone.