

# FIRST COAST CARDIOVASCULAR INSTITUTE

EXCELLENCE IS NEVER AN ACCIDENT, IT IS OUR LIFELONG COMMITMENT.

## HELPING YOUR PATIENTS AVOID

# AMPUTATION

Left to right:  
Mary Sbriner, Michael Harris and  
Edna Arnold

**Edna Arnold** is a former child day-care owner who once enjoyed running and playing with the 40 children placed in her care. Today, she's lucky to be walking at all. So she savors the ability to help care for and to simply play with her 5-year-old granddaughter, Chloe.

"Oh, it is the saddest feeling to think that I couldn't be out with her, to think about not being able to help my friends and family," says Arnold, 60, whose diabetes and chronic poor circulation problems nearly forced the amputation of her left leg seven years ago. Arnold was devastated, but began to resign herself to the thought of losing her leg. That was before she met First Coast Cardiovascular Institute's (FCCI) Majdi Ashchi, D.O., a leading specialist in endovascular care, or treatment of vascular disease from inside the blood vessel.

"I did not believe Dr. Ashchi when he told me that he thought he could save my leg," she recalls.

Dr. Ashchi understands that disbelief. After all, he's seen patient after patient who was told the same thing — that nothing could be done.

"Just because they cannot do it, it does not mean it cannot be done or that it should not be tried," Dr. Ashchi says. "The alternative is costly — amputation."

Using the latest minimally invasive techniques, Dr. Ashchi placed several stents in Arnold's legs and heart.

"I'm up to being able to walk half a mile now," Arnold says. "For most people, that might not sound like much, but for me, it's a lot."

These days, many people are sharing Arnold's smile — people whose

lives might well have been terribly, unnecessarily altered had it not been for Dr. Ashchi and partner, Yazan Khatib, M.D. The two are among leaders in a medical movement of sorts dubbed "Limb Salvage" or "Amputation Prevention." They run FCCI with the aid of Vaqar Ali, M.D., and Youssef Al-Saghir, M.D., true leaders in cardiovascular and endovascular care.

FCCI specializes in treating cardiovascular and endovascular conditions with minimally invasive techniques, focusing on the root problems. They help patients identify and amend lifestyle choices that cause them to face possible amputation. And they provide "endless possibilities," a phrase that patient Michael Harris now believes in.

"Dr. Khatib could fix the problem that no one else could fix," Harris said. The Jacksonville resident suffers circulation problems stemming from both an inherited peripheral vascular disease that affects his right leg and a 1991 motorcycle accident that seriously damaged his left leg.

"I got to the point where I couldn't sleep at night," Harris says of the chronic, debilitating pain. "My main arteries were blocked and it felt like pins and needles all through my leg."

After several surgeons recommended amputation, Harris decided to get one more opinion. That's when he found FCCI, which has locations in Mandarin, Southside, Jacksonville Beach, and Orange Park.

"Dr. Khatib reviewed the films and actually told my wife, 'I'm 95 percent sure I can fix your husband's prob-



lem," Harris said. "I made up my mind then to have it done."

Whether you visit FCCI or another specialist, Drs. Ashchi and Khatib recommend conducting your own research.

"Patients should ask their doctors about their experience in doing these procedures," Dr. Ashchi says. "They absolutely should ask if their doctors are board certified in vascular medicine and endovascular medicine. And lastly they should ask for references from patients who had true limb salvage. We are willing to let anyone talk to our patients."



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