



River Park Hospital has invested in a first-rate CT scanner that can provide high-resolution images never before available at the facility. The

CT scanner will allow a number of residents to stay in McMinnville instead of going out of town for tests.

River Park steps up technology with high-resolution CT scanner

By JAMES CLARK

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(McMinnville, Tenn.)

River Park has joined the ranks of hospital heavyweights with a new piece of equipment that places it in a class with the premier hospitals in the Midstate.

It's a new CT scanner that provides some of the most detailed images available today.

The scanner is a GE LightSpeed VCT XT and it reduces radiation exposure, enhances image quality, and does it in a fraction of the time of other CT scanners. It also gives River Park the ability to capture high-resolution heart images for the first time, along with providing greater detail for head, abdomen, and other body parts.

"This is the same technology they have available at Vanderbilt and St. Thomas," said River Park imaging director Debra Powers. "The Heart Group we have here locally, everything they do in sending patients to St. Thomas we can now do right here. It's all about providing a better quality of care here at River Park. We're working to improve technology and patient satisfaction."

The new scanner has been operational for a week. Powers said four River Park staff members spent two weeks in Wisconsin training on the scanner. But she said the GE operating platform is not much different than other GE scanners the hospital uses so adjusting to the new piece of equipment has not been difficult.

The LightSpeed is able to collect much more detailed



James Clark photos

River Park imaging director Debra Powers says the new CT scanner has capabilities equivalent to any scanner at Vanderbilt or St. Thomas.

images because it uses 64 "slices" to gather its information. This is 32 times more powerful than the hospital's next most sophisticated scanner which uses two slices.

"What it means in layman's terms is each slice allows you to see so much more," said Powers. "It's a whole new level of CT scanning."

If a stroke patient is admitted to the hospital, the new CT scanner can be used to examine blood vessels in the brain and immediately determine the viable and non-viable tissue. The images are such high quality, it gives patients greater peace of mind knowing their condition will be monitored with the most up-to-date technology available.

"I always hate to tell a patient we can't do that here and that they have to go some-

where else," said Powers. "Now we don't have to do that."

The LightSpeed VCT XT has been showcased at medical conventions from New Orleans to Los Angeles. Among its other features, the ability to provide enhanced images of the heart, at low radiation doses, has been highly touted.

"I've been doing cardiac CT for four years and this is the most exciting development I've used," said Dr. James Earls of Fairfax Radiological Consultants in Fairfax, Va., in promoting the product for GE. "The patient benefit is huge. To be able to reduce the radiation dose by up to 70 percent in some cases really changes the paradigm on how radiologists will approach patients who have different degrees of risk factors."