

Your heart is in good hands with us – the latest specialisms and optimum treatment

Cases of cardiovascular disease are on the increase worldwide. There has been a sea change in treatment methods over the last few years. At the German Heart Centre Munich, the disciplines of cardiology and cardiovascular surgery have been organised in an interdisciplinary structure to enable even complicated forms of cardiovascular disease to be treated.

Professor
Rüdiger Lange,
Director of the
Department of
Cardiovascular
Surgery, at the
German Heart
Centre Munich
(DHM)



The German Heart Centre Munich (DHM), part of Munich University of Technology, is one of the world's leading and most modern specialist centres for the treatment of cardiovascular disease in adults and children. Founded in 1974, the DHM was one of Europe's first heart centres and has provided the impetus for numerous medical developments since then. An early milestone was the first successful heart transplant in Germany, which took place on 7 May 1981. Professor Rüdiger Lange has been Director of the Department of Cardiovascular Surgery at the DHM since 1999. He has overseen the development of minimally invasive surgery, the world's first totally endoscopic mitral valve reconstruction using the 'Da Vinci' telemanipulator and the earliest example worldwide of the implantation of a catheter-supported CoreValve aortic valve via the apex of the heart and aorta.

Progress and change in heart surgery

Just ten years ago, the standard procedure for most patients was still open heart surgery, whereas today the point of access and the surgical method are adapted to meet the individual needs of the patient. Our department attaches particular importance to preserving – i.d. reconstructing – the heart valve in heart valve repair procedures. This requires exceptionally well experienced and specially trained surgeons.

Minimally invasive methods

We also specialise in minimally invasive surgery, which only requires small incisions. This technique has cosmetic benefits and also speeds up the healing process. For example, video-assisted reconstruction of the mitral valve uses incisions of only five to six centimetres in length extending from the right rib cage. It is no longer necessary to open the sternum with this method.

Low-impact surgery for high-risk patients

Paediatric heart operations also pose a special challenge to surgeons, which is why we have set up a specially trained operative team in our department. Because of this, we are now a leading international provider of treatment for congenital heart defects in adults and children, both in terms of our expertise and the number of operations we perform. We have even repaired complex congenital heart defects in babies weighing less than 2,000 grams.

The department is one of the world's leading centres for valve implantations via catheter, with nearly 1,000 implantations performed since 2007. This method opens up new treatment options, particularly for elderly high-risk patients for whom a traditional operation is not recommended. The surgery is performed on the beating heart through a vascular incision in the groin. If the artery in the groin is unsuitable, the cardiac valve is implanted through a minimal incision in the chest and via the apex of the heart. This procedure is particularly low-impact for patients.

Patients from abroad are very welcome

The DHM is held in such high regard because, besides our top-quality medical care and full range of heart treatments, we also offer a special level of service for non-German-speaking patients. For example, the centre's signs are multilingual to ensure everyone can find their way, while an interpreting service helps people understand what is going on throughout their stay. Our staff go out of their way to accommodate the special requests of patients and work in a courteous and friendly manner. We have published detailed information for you in several languages on our website.