

DA SILVA CENTER for Ebstein's Anomaly UPDATE

UPMC | CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL OF PITTSBURGH

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Welcome to the second issue of the *Da Silva Center for Ebstein's Anomaly Update*. We are excited to share program news and education from the Da Silva Center, part of the Heart Institute at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. In this edition, we will share:

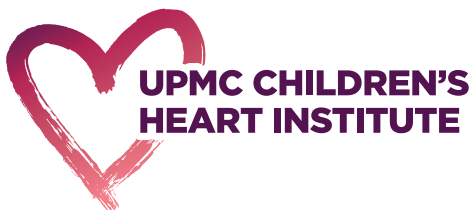
- An overview of the Center and our team's accomplishments from this past year
- A recap of the 2026 Da Silva Center for Ebstein's Anomaly Symposium
- Educational materials about the Cone repair after a Starnes procedure
- An interview with Gaurav Arora, MD, highlighting the importance of electrophysiology expertise in treating patients with Ebstein's anomaly
- Resources for children and families traveling to the Da Silva Center
- Research spotlight: Luciana da Fonseca da Silva, MD
- A preview of the new UPMC Children's Heart Institute
- One patient's experience receiving the Cone repair

About the Da Silva Center for Ebstein's Anomaly

The Da Silva Center for Ebstein's Anomaly is a global leader in the treatment and study of Ebstein's anomaly — a rare and complex congenital heart defect. José Pedro da Silva, MD, creator of the groundbreaking Cone procedure, founded the Da Silva Center for Ebstein's Anomaly at UPMC Children's in 2016. Now, under the leadership of Luciana da Fonseca da Silva, MD, the center continues to serve as a hub for adults and children seeking expert care for this rare congenital heart defect.

In 2025 alone, the Da Silvas successfully performed 45 Cone procedures. The Da Silvas continue to pioneer new frontiers in Ebstein's anomaly care, improving outcomes and advancing treatment options for patients across their lifespan.

These efforts reflect the Center's mission: to innovate, educate, and restore heart function in even the most complex cases, like those with severely displaced valves. Our team also integrates molecular biology research to better understand and eventually target the mechanisms driving right ventricular failure, setting the stage for the next generation of treatments.



2026 Da Silva Symposium – “Paving the Way for the Cone”

On June 6, 2026, the Heart Institute at UPMC Children's hosted the sixth annual Da Silva Center for Ebstein's Anomaly Symposium. This year's symposium focused on improving clinicians' ability to strategically plan early interventions with the Cone procedure in mind, enhance multidisciplinary coordination, and standardize long term management pathways for patients with Ebstein's anomaly.

Attendees at this year's event gained insight on how to:

- Plan early care with the Cone procedure in mind to optimize long term surgical outcomes.
- Strengthen team communication and coordination across cardiology, surgery, imaging, and nursing.
- Use standardized pathways for interventions, imaging, and

referral decisions.

- Make more informed surgical choices that preserve anatomy and support future Cone repair.
- Improve long term patient outcomes by aligning care along the “Road to the Cone Procedure.”

You can view the presentations from this year's symposium [here](#).

Cone Repair After a Starnes Procedure

The Da Silva Center for Ebstein's Anomaly delivers world-class surgical outcomes built on decades of innovation and experience. Our team continues to redefine what's possible in the treatment of this complex congenital heart condition, including performing the Cone procedure after the Starnes procedure.

In 2025, attendees at the Da Silva Center for Ebstein's Anomaly Symposium were presented with comprehensive lectures on Ebstein's anomaly, the utilization of advanced diagnostic imaging, the Cone repair after Starnes procedure surgical

technique, and our program's approach to patient care for both children and adults.

You can view these recordings [here](#).

For a more in-depth analysis of this surgical method, you can read our team's publication in [Seminars in Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery: Pediatric Cardiac Surgery Annual 2025 Volume 28](#). This article outlines the staged repair for critical neonatal Ebstein's anomaly while highlighting details of the Starnes procedure, the intermediate interventions, and the Cone repair after Starnes.

Resources for Your Patients

If your patient and their family are traveling to Pittsburgh for care at the Da Silva Center, we can help them prepare for the journey ahead. Whether they are coming from another state or country, we offer personalized support services to help them feel at home during their stay.

We know that traveling for medical care can be overwhelming. To help ease them through the planning process, we've compiled a list of resources and tips in one place to make their planning as smooth as possible. These resources include:

- Housing accommodations
- Translation support
- Hospital amenities

[Learn More](#)

Your patient and their families can also visit our [Traveling Patient Services](#) page to learn more about the hospitality, medical, administrative, and financial services available to help support them in the process of receiving care for their child.



Q&A with Gaurav Arora, MD – Electrophysiology Expertise in Treating Patient's with Ebstein's Anomaly



When it comes to treating patients with Ebstein's anomaly, this patient population is likely to experience associated heart electrical problems. In these cases, it's important to refer to electrophysiology experts. The team at the Da Silva Center works closely with the electrophysiology team at UPMC, ensuring

that each patient is receiving the best care based on their unique needs.

Gaurav Arora, MD, director of electrophysiology at UPMC Children's, speaks to this collaborative approach, and the importance of applying specialized electrophysiology knowledge in cases of Ebstein's anomaly.

How does electrophysiology play a role in treating Ebstein's anomaly?

Patients with Ebstein's anomaly have a congenitally abnormal tricuspid, which can come with associated heart electrical problems. Because they have valve dysfunction and often have an enlarged right atrium, that can lead to atrial arrhythmias.

Ebstein's anomaly patients can present dilated heart and accessory pathways, with a higher likelihood of issues like Wolff-Parkinson-White (WPW) and supraventricular tachycardia (SVT). The electrophysiologist's role in treating Ebstein's anomaly is often related to sorting out whether there are accessory pathways present around the valve and how to deal with those prior to and/or at the time of surgery on the valve to hopefully eliminate those connections.

How might a patient with Ebstein's anomaly benefit from electrophysiology services?

There are a couple of different ways a patient can benefit from EP services. In many cases, patients can have symptomatic heart rhythm-related episodes. That is part of the electrical problem that goes with Ebstein's. So, having an electrophysiologist as part of the team can be helpful in addressing those symptoms.

In other cases, patients can be vulnerable to arrhythmia issues even if they haven't experienced them yet. Identifying this information prior to surgery is helpful because it can maximize the chance that we'll have a good long-term outcome.

When might a physician treating a patient with Ebstein's anomaly need to refer for EP expertise?

This varies throughout the country, if not the world. There are some centers that advocate that every patient undergoing surgery should see an electrophysiologist and have what's called an "EP study" before the Cone repair.

There are other centers, like ours, where we have a protocol of identify which patients need an EP study. At our center, our EP team reviews the patient's information. If they have a history of known symptoms, then we recommend that they see our team and consider an EP study before we think about doing surgery. If they do not have symptoms or history of arrhythmias, our institution does not perform an EP study routinely on those patients.

Why is specialized knowledge in electrophysiology important in treating patients with Ebstein's anomaly?

Patients who have Ebstein's anomaly and accessory pathways are unique and differ from those patients who have structurally normal hearts with accessory pathways. The more Ebstein's anomaly cases we treat, the more we see that Ebstein's anomaly patients behave differently than patients with structurally normal hearts, from an EP perspective. The usual methods we would rely on in patients with structurally normal hearts, we can't always rely on with patients with Ebstein's anomaly. Those cases are more challenging and you have to take that into account when you take care of them.

Additionally, because Dr. Luciana da Fonseca da Silva and Dr. Jose da Silva are doing surgery on neonates and young children, we're doing EP studies in the same population. So, our approach has adapted because of that. We partner with the surgical team to find the best approach that will minimize the risk of injury. So, in very small children, we'll do an EP study if it's indicated. However, rather than trying to treat them in the cath lab, we partner with the surgical team and ask them to do ablation at the time of surgery. Then, we test afterwards in the ICU. So far, that approach has worked well to help have success in minimizing the potential for injury. That multidisciplinary approach is something that we do here that we think allows us to treat small patients successfully with a lower risk profile.

Learn more about the [EP Program](#) at the Heart Institute.

Research Spotlight – Dr. Luciana da Fonseca da Silva



Luciana da Fonseca da Silva, MD, program director of the Da Silva Center for Ebstein's Anomaly, is an internationally recognized expert in performing the Cone procedure for Ebstein's Anomaly in both children and adults.

Dr. da Fonseca da Silva treats patients with various types of congenital heart defects,

having a special interest in the repair of heart valves and minimally invasive procedures. She is also an associate professor at University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine and is widely published in medical journals.

Dr. da Fonseca da Silva continues to lead groundbreaking research about innovative surgical techniques, including:

- **Management of Ebstein's anomaly in children and adults**
 - [The American Association for Thoracic Surgery \(AATS\) 2025 Expert Consensus Document: Management of Ebstein anomaly in children and adults - ScienceDirect](#)

- **The cone repair allows right ventricle rehabilitation with excellent tricuspid valve function following the Starnes procedure**
 - [The cone repair allows right ventricle rehabilitation with excellent tricuspid valve function following the Starnes procedure - JTCVS](#)
- **Mid-term recovery of right ventricular function and improvement of left ventricular function after Cone procedure**
 - [Mid-Term Recovery of Right Ventricular Function and Improvement of Left Ventricular Function After Da Silva Cone Procedure for Ebstein Anomaly - PubMed](#)
- **Cone repair after Fontan procedure**
 - [The cone repair after Fontan procedure: Conversion from completed single-ventricle pathway after the Starnes procedure to biventricular physiology - PubMed](#)

Jessica's Experience at the Da Silva Center

Tamsin was nearing the end of pregnancy with her twin daughters, Jessica and Charlotte, when she learned that Jessica was diagnosed with Ebstein's anomaly — a rare and complex congenital heart defect. As Jessica got older and her heart grew larger, her parents began navigating treatment options for her condition.

Through her own research on social media, Tamsin discovered the Da Silva Center for Ebstein's Anomaly at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. The team looked at Jessica's scans and felt confident they could perform the cone procedure.

Living in the United Kingdom added an additional layer of challenges. But, with the help of UPMC International, they were able to seamlessly transition Jessica's care to UPMC Children's and schedule her surgery with Luciana da Fonseca da Silva, MD, in just a matter of weeks.

Jessica underwent the cone procedure in January 2025, just before her 11th birthday. Jessica loves plush bunnies. She brought her newest bunny, a Christmas gift, to Children's. "Bunny" provided extra comfort and support in the days leading up to and after the procedure.

"The outcome has been incredible," Tamsin says. Jessica now has energy to do things she didn't have the stamina for before, like swimming laps in the pool with Charlotte.

Tamsin noted the incredible support from the Da Silva Center team throughout the entire surgical journey. While Jessica and her family are now back in the United Kingdom, the Da Silva team has remained closely involved in her follow-up care.



The Heart Institute at UPMC Children's Unveils State-of-the-Art Facility



In June, the Heart Institute unveiled a new, state-of-the-art facility home to the most advanced technology for treating patients with congenital and acquired heart disease. The new 50,000 square foot building is home to the Da Silva Center and features:

- Three revolutionary cardiac catheterization labs, including one directly connected to a cardiac MRI suite, which features the CiMRIS (Cardiac Interventional Magnetic Resonance Imaging Suite) technology. This connection provides direct access between the catheterization lab and cardiac MRI to perform special procedures and reduces the x-ray exposure to the patient.
- Nine private pre- and post-procedure rooms to enhance the patient experience by allowing them to return to the same location after their procedure.
- A connection bridge to the hospital for patients who need to stay overnight in one of UPMC Children's cardiac units, with a special and separate entrance for patients and families to utilize.

Phase two of the building project will open in 2027 and feature an expanded cardiac clinic home to 14 exam rooms, eight echocardiogram (ECHO) labs, a cardiac exercise lab, and a dedicated Pediatric Cardiac Rehabilitation Gym, the first pediatric program of its kind in the tri-state area.

The new expansion at UPMC Children's allows our team to continue to serve as leaders in the field of pediatric cardiology and cardiothoracic surgery. With the state-of-the-art technology available in the space, we can provide the most advanced care for individuals diagnosed with congenital heart disease, including Ebstein's anomaly.

Contact Us

At the Da Silva Center for Ebstein's Anomaly, collaboration with referring providers is key to our mission of providing comprehensive care to children and adults with Ebstein's anomaly. When you refer a patient to UPMC, we will work with you to create a plan specific to your patient's needs and maintain open communication throughout each stage of your patient's journey.

To refer a patient, or discuss a case with our team, call **412-692-5218** or email dasilvacenter@upmc.edu.

