

WHAT IS THE 100 TOP HOSPITALS: CARDIOVASCULAR AWARD?

The Thomson Reuters 100 Top Hospitals®: Cardiovascular Benchmarks award names hospitals that have achieved the highest national scores (benchmarks) on a set of important measures of cardiovascular care. We use a range of measures to identify well-managed cardiovascular programs that produce sound patient outcomes in four cardiovascular treatment areas: heart attack, heart failure, angioplasty, and bypass. We produce these benchmarks every year for hospitals across the country to target improved cardiovascular performance.

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A GUIDE TO THE THOMSON REUTERS 100 TOP HOSPITALS®: CARDIOVASCULAR BENCHMARKS 2009


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WHAT MEASURES ARE USED TO IDENTIFY WELL-MANAGED CARDIOVASCULAR PROGRAMS?

The 100 Top Hospitals Cardiovascular award is based on a wide set of measures:

Patient outcomes

We monitor survival rates for heart attack, heart failure, angioplasty, and heart bypass patients plus low rates of surgical complications like infections and severe bleeding after surgery.

National treatment standards

- **Core measures:** A set of basic care practices developed by The Joint Commission (a nonprofit healthcare evaluation organization) that should be used for all heart attack and heart failure patients. A hospital is scored only on those measures that it reports publicly. Hospital-specific scores are available at hospitalcompare.hhs.gov and qualitycheck.org.
- **Surgical technique:** Use of the internal mammary artery in heart bypass — a standard for heart bypasses set by the Society of Thoracic Surgeons. Although this is not possible for all patients, we look for a very high percentage in the best cardiovascular programs.

Efficiency

In the best cardiovascular programs, the hospital's cardiovascular staff is a team that constantly works together to do the right thing at the right time. When this happens, the patients are returned to daily life faster and costs are kept lower.

Procedure volume

It makes sense that practice makes perfect. National volume standards have been set for the number of angioplasties and heart bypasses performed to assure reliable results.

IF THIS AWARD IS FOR HOSPITALS, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PATIENTS?

While there are no perfect cardiovascular hospitals, research has shown that surgeon and hospital teamwork produces a greater likelihood of better outcomes, adherence to standards, and more

reasonable costs. Patients can feel comfortable that a 100 Top Hospitals Cardiovascular award-winning hospital has adopted a team approach to heart care and is performing well against national standards. Its management, doctors, nurses, and hospital employees work together to constantly measure, review, and improve performance to make it a better place to be treated for heart disease.

DOES THIS MEAN THAT I SHOULD CHOOSE THIS HOSPITAL FOR MY CARDIOVASCULAR CARE?

Hospital choice is a complex decision that requires consultation with your physician about your illness and the type of treatment best for you. This study does not address all possible issues that are important to you.

The 100 Top Hospitals Cardiovascular study is an objective statistical comparison of cardiovascular performance using publicly available data. A 100 Top Hospitals Cardiovascular award-winning hospital, compared with similar hospitals on the measures listed, has set national standards for treating cardiovascular disease in the year preceding the award. These hospitals have set a standard to which other hospitals can aspire in the coming year.

WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT TO WIN THIS AWARD?

There are two reasons:

1. This award uses only statistical information to select the top performers from nearly 1,000 hospitals across the country. The 100 Top Hospitals Cardiovascular award winners must perform well across many measures. We match your hospital to only similar hospitals before computing and comparing scores to choose the top performers.
2. The measures we use change, usually every year, based on new and higher standards of care. For example, the survival rate for cardiovascular patients has risen every year for more than 10 years, thus raising the standard for patient survival. To win, a hospital must keep up with new performance standards, and develop new techniques to achieve better performance.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN IF MY HOSPITAL DOESN'T WIN AGAIN NEXT YEAR?

Winners of the 100 Top Hospitals Cardiovascular award are like athletes who win a national championship one year — they may not win the championship the second year, but they are still high performers.

It is very difficult to achieve national benchmark level performance every year. Only a handful of hospitals in the United States have won this award every year since its inception in 1999. It is exceedingly difficult to win this award even once and should be a point of pride in the hospital and the community.

WHO PERFORMS THE 100 TOP HOSPITALS STUDIES AND WHY?

Thomson Reuters, a global healthcare information company, performs the study annually at its own expense to share the new standards being set by the hospital industry, enabling other hospitals to improve their own cardiovascular performance.

By using only high-quality public data, we are able to measure all hospitals and report the most reliable standards. Only 100 hospitals, selected from three categories (teaching hospitals with cardiovascular residency programs, teaching hospitals without cardiovascular residency programs, and community hospitals) are named.

Thomson Reuters also produces the 100 Top Hospitals: National Benchmarks and Health System Quality/Efficiency Benchmarks studies.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE?

To learn more about the 100 Top Hospitals program, including lists of the most recent award winners and details on the measures used, visit 100tophospitals.com
