

# Less is More

## Minimally invasive surgery provides patients with faster recovery

Commonly called endoscopic, laparoscopic or minimal access surgery, minimally invasive procedures have revolutionized the way surgical procedures are performed. With the use of specialized techniques and state-of-the-art equipment, surgeons are able to perform operations as complicated as tumor removal through an incision that requires only a stitch or two to close.

several small, specialized instruments. The endoscope, a long, flexible tube with a camera and light attached, is inserted into a small incision and allows the surgeon to view the problem area on a video monitor. These magnified images reduce the need for a large incision and help the surgeon navigate his or her way around the surgical site more efficiently. Other dime-sized openings also are created in order for the specialized instruments to perform the operation.

“We’re concentrating on minimally invasive techniques now more than ever. It’s extraordinary to see how many departments—from urology to gynecology and cardiology to neurology—have embraced minimally invasive procedures to treat patients.”

—Dr. Andersen

“Minimally invasive techniques are as good, if not better, than traditional surgery,” says Dana Andersen, M.D., chair of the Division of Surgery. “But the beauty of these procedures are the benefits to the patients.”

Since no large incisions are made, patients are generally able to get back to their normal activities much faster after a minimally invasive procedure than a traditional surgery. Says Dr. Andersen, “Quicker recovery is just one of the many benefits of minimally invasive surgery.”

While the specifics of minimally invasive procedures vary from case-to-case, most use an endoscope and

There are, however, even “newer” procedures that use natural orifices in the body to perform the surgery. Called natural orifice surgery (NOS), surgeons insert a surgical instrument in a natural orifice, such as the mouth. These procedures take “minimally invasive” to a whole new level. In fact, NOS is completely incisionless, which mean no scars and faster recovery. (See

*sidebar on EsophyX, a new NOS procedure.*)

If you’re considering surgery, ask your surgeon if there is a minimally invasive approach available.

—Meghan Rossbach

### Benefits of Minimally Invasive Surgery

**Less Hospital Time** While minimally invasive procedures are performed on both an inpatient and outpatient basis, many patients spend less time in the hospital than with a traditional surgery. For example, a laparoscopic gallbladder removal may call for one night in the hospital—or none at all—whereas in a traditional surgery, patients could be hospitalized for up to five days.

**Less Pain** “Patients may experience some post-operative pain and discomfort, but nothing as severe as that of a traditional surgery,” says Dr. Andersen. Since surgeons use less invasive techniques (no cutting through muscle or bone), there is typically less pain involved. Less pain also requires smaller doses of pain relievers.

**Less Injury to Tissue** Most traditional surgeries require a long incision that may need to be made through muscle. Since minimally invasive techniques involve small incisions, surgeons do not have to cut through muscle to complete the procedure. Less invasive procedures also result in less tissue damage and smaller scars.



## Even “Less” Invasive Minimally Invasive Surgery

### EsophyX Offers Relief for Patients with Heartburn

There’s a revolutionary surgery for chronic heartburn sufferers. “Called EsophyX, this technique repairs the anatomy between the esophagus and stomach to prevent acid reflux,” says Michael Schweitzer, M.D., co-director of minimally invasive bariatric surgery and one of the first surgeons in the U.S. to be trained in the surgery. The procedure is performed through the mouth, which means no incisions, no scars and a quick recovery. With this new procedure, patients with chronic heartburn get the relief they’ve been searching for almost instantly.

For more information on this revolutionary procedure, call 410-550-0409.

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