



Health Watch

By Keith Jones

“Less is More” with Minimally-Invasive Surgery

IMAGINE HAVING YOUR KNEE REPLACED and being back on one of Scottsdale's beautiful golf courses within a month or so. Or having a hysterectomy or a cancerous prostate removed and resuming your Saturday morning hike within three or four weeks.

Minimally invasive surgery is making these scenarios a reality. Compared to traditional open surgery, minimally invasive surgery means less time in the hospital, less pain, smaller incisions, less scarring, less recovery time, less complications — and more time doing what you want to do (like enjoying life) or what you need to do (like go to work).

At Scottsdale Healthcare, experienced surgeons are using minimally invasive surgery — often combined with the latest medical technology — to benefit patients with a variety of health issues.

For instance, physicians are using the daVinci surgical robot at Scottsdale Healthcare Thompson Peak Hospital and Scottsdale Healthcare Shea Medical Center for surgery to treat prostate, kidney, bladder, and gynecological cancer.

Scottsdale Healthcare is Arizona's pioneer in robotic surgery with the daVinci. The state's first robot-assisted

prostatectomy and other procedures were done at Scottsdale Healthcare beginning in 2002.

Using the robot, surgeons sit at a digital console and view a magnified image of the surgical field — in 3D, high definition. The robot's computer-guided instruments correspond to the surgeon's movements at the console, allowing the surgeon to operate in real-time through tiny incisions.

“With minimally invasive surgery, blood loss is dramatically reduced, so there's less chance of complications and recuperation is much sooner. But the most important thing is that the cure rate is the same. It's just as effective as traditional open surgery,” says Gil Brito, MD, a urologist and medical director of minimally invasive surgery at Scottsdale Healthcare.

Another benefit of the daVinci surgical robot is that it allows some typically difficult procedures to be done with the advantages of minimally invasive techniques.

When the robot is used to treat severe prolapse, for example, only an overnight stay is generally needed. Traditionally, the condition requires major abdominal surgery for the most effective treatment. This often leads physicians and patients to try other less-effective treatments to avoid

the drawbacks of such dramatic surgery, says Dr. Brito.

Scottsdale Healthcare is a leader in the Southwest in minimally invasive surgery, according to Dr. Brito. “Our robotics program is one of the most mature, high-volume programs in Arizona,” he continues.

But several other elements make Scottsdale Healthcare's minimally invasive surgery program unique.

For starters, patients at Scottsdale Healthcare are cared for by elite Magnet award-winning nurses. Magnet recognition is considered the gold standard in patient care and was awarded by the American Nurses Association. Scottsdale Healthcare Thompson Peak Hospital follows these same patient care practices and will be included in Scottsdale Healthcare's next Magnet survey.

Also making Scottsdale Healthcare unique is the fact that it is “truly multispecialty” with its robotic and other minimally invasive surgery offerings, Dr. Brito says.

He noted that abnormal heart rhythms are being treated with the Hansen Medical Sensei Robotic Catheter System, new technology that Scottsdale Healthcare was first in Arizona to have.

Additionally, weight-loss surgery is be-

ing performed completely laparoscopically at Scottsdale Healthcare's Bariatric Surgery Center of Excellence. Laparoscopic procedures are sometimes referred to a “Band-Aid” surgery because medical instruments are inserted through tiny incisions and large cuts aren't made.

Even total knee replacements are being done with the advantages of minimally invasive techniques. Orthopedic surgeon Stefan Tarlow, MD, performs the knee replacements by making small incisions and using a computer with a GPS-like device that enables him to precisely and accurately place the new knee. The procedure is done without cutting through the large muscle on the front of the thigh.

“Minimally invasive surgery is improving patients' lives after knee replacement. Many patients have less post-operative pain, recover faster and are hospitalized for only one or two nights,” says Dr. Tarlow, who performs many of the minimally invasive knee replacements with computer navigation at Scottsdale Healthcare Thompson Peak Hospital.

Impressively, Dr. Tarlow and Scottsdale Healthcare Thompson Peak Hospital were chosen to be among the first to use Visionaire Patient Matched technology in knee replacement surgery. This technology uses a patient's MRI and x-rays to create custom surgical instruments that are designed for each patient's anatomical data.

The disposable instruments help surgeons eliminate multiple steps and precisely place the new knee implant. As a result, surgery times are shorter, risk of infection is less and patients spend less time under anesthesia.

“So much is done now with robotics and other technology. If you need surgery, you ought to investigate if it can be done through minimally invasive techniques,” he said. ■

To find out if minimally invasive surgery is right for you, ask your physician or call Scottsdale Healthcare at (480) 323-3350 to learn more.

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Scottsdale Healthcare is the not-for-profit parent organization of three community medical centers. Scottsdale Healthcare Thompson Peak is located at 7400 E. Thompson Peak Pkwy., Scottsdale, AZ 85255, (480) 324-7000. Scottsdale Healthcare Shea is located at 9003 E. Shea Blvd., Scottsdale, AZ 85260, (480) 323-3000. Scottsdale Healthcare Osborn is located at 7400 E. Osborn Rd., Scottsdale, AZ 85255, (480) 882-4000. Learn more at www.shc.org.