

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Robotically Assisted Surgery

What is robotically assisted surgery?

Robotically assisted surgery is a new way of performing minimally invasive surgery (MIS) incorporating techniques that allow a surgeon to operate through several small incisions about the size of a dime.

Who is using robotic surgery?

Robotic surgery is used worldwide for performing a variety of surgical procedures. The first field to capitalize on this surgery in Central Massachusetts was urology.

What are the benefits of using robotically assisted surgery over more traditional methods of open surgery?

Some of the surgical benefits are greater precision, increased range of motion, improved dexterity and enhanced 3D visualization. Patients have experienced shorter hospital stays, less pain, less risk of infection, less blood loss and transfusions, and less scarring, as well as faster recovery and return to normal daily activities. For instance, robotically assisted heart bypass surgery prevents the need to open the patient's sternum. Robotically assisted prostatectomy reduces the incidence of undesirable side effects, such as incontinence and impotence, that can result from traditional surgical methods. As with any surgical procedure, these benefits cannot be guaranteed as surgery is both patient- and procedure-specific.

Who actually performs the surgery, the robot or surgeon?

The surgeon uses the robot as a sophisticated piece of surgical equipment to perform the surgery.

What is the da Vinci® Surgical System?

The da Vinci Surgical System is an "intuitive" laparoscopic surgical robot. It integrates the latest advancements in robotics, computer-enhanced technology and the surgeon's skill. The System consists of several components: a surgeon console, a patient-side cart, instruments and image processing equipment.

What types of procedures are being done using the da Vinci® System?

Today, the da Vinci® System is being used to help surgeons perform complex procedures within cardiac, general thoracic, urological and gynecological procedures. At Saint Vincent Hospital, we are presently using the da Vinci surgical system in prostate cancer procedures and in the treatment of gynecological disorders.

Will this system make the surgeon unnecessary?

On the contrary, it is designed to enable a surgeon to be more precise, to advance his or her technique, and to enhance his or her capability to perform complex minimally invasive surgery. The system replicates a surgeon's movements in real time. It cannot be programmed, nor can it make decisions on its own to move in any way, or perform any type of surgical maneuver without a surgeon's input.

For more information about robotically assisted surgery at Saint Vincent Hospital, please call Susan Faneuf at (508) 363-9065.



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