Evergreen Hospital Performs Region's First Single-Site Gallbladder Removal Using da Vinci Robot

The Associated Press

Evergreen Hospital - one of the region's leaders in minimally invasive surgery - performed the first robot-assisted single-incision gallbladder removal in the Washington and Oregon region on March 21 in a procedure just approved by the FDA.

Evergreen's Dr. Michael Towbin removed the gallbladders from two patients - a 66-year-old man and a 33-year-old woman - making a small, single incision in the patients' belly buttons using the da Vinci robot-assisted system.

"We are pleased to offer this exciting technology that, combined with the skill of our highly trained medical staff, will allow us to provide our patients with a safer outpatient procedure with significantly reduced recovery times," said Evergreen Healthcare CEO Bob Malte.

Normally, gallbladder surgery requires a large opening in the abdomen, or in laparoscopic surgery, multiple incisions in the abdomen.

Traditional surgery typically requires an in-patient hospital stay with recovery times ranging from days to weeks.

The gallbladder is a pear-shaped organ that sits just below the liver on the upper-right side of the abdomen. It collects and stores bile - a digestive fluid produced in the liver - and its removal can relieve the pain and discomfort of gallstones. The new surgical method with the da Vinci system will lead to safer outcomes and fast recovery times.

Surgeons use the da Vinci robot's master controls to maneuver surgical instruments while being guided by a high-resolution endoscopic camera.

The da Vinci robot arms extend the natural motion of the surgeon's hands and refine those movements to reduce the likelihood of error.

The system allows surgeons to operate with precision, enhanced maneuverability and three-dimensional visualization.

The adoption of the da Vinci system is one step in Evergreen's history of serving the community with patient-friendly technology. Evergreen recently introduced MAKOplasty, a minimally invasive partial knee replacement surgical option. It joins Evergreen's suite of technology for hip and knee replacement surgery, which includes arthroscopy, computer navigation and minimally invasive total knee replacement.

Evergreen has used the da Vinci robot for two years now, and in response to growing patient demand, will soon add a second system.

To learn more about the Evergreen's minimally invasive surgical program, visit www.evergreenhealthcare.org or call the Evergreen Healthline 425.899.3000.

Editor's note: A previous version of this release was issued with the headline "Evergreen Hospital to Perform Region's First Single-Incision Gallbladder Removal." A more accurate headline has been included here to highlight the fact that this was the first such procedure to be robotically assisted.

About Evergreen Healthcare Evergreen Healthcare, a public hospital district and community-based health care organization established in 1972, offers a breadth of services and programs that is among the most comprehensive in the region. More than 950 physicians provide clinical excellence within more than 80 specialties, including cardiac, oncology, surgical care, orthopedics, a Neuroscience Institute, Women's and Children's services, hospice care, pulmonary care, a Sleep Disorders Center and Home Health services care. Evergreen serves more than 400,000 residents in its primary service area of northern King and southern Snohomish counties with Evergreen Medical Group, a network of primary and urgent care practices, and Evergreen Hospital Medical Center, its main hospital campus in Kirkland, Wash. Evergreen also provides emergency care at two sites; its main hospital campus and the Evergreen Redmond Medical Center. In addition to clinical care, Evergreen offers extensive community health outreach and education programs, anchored by Evergreen Healthline, a 24/7 nurse consultation service. For more information, visit www.evergreenhealthcare.org .

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