

One smooth operator

Surgeon uses robotic surgery to help husband and wife

When you've been married 39 years, you share a lot of interests and life experiences. Debbie and Clayton Hampy can now add robotic surgery to the list.

When a mass was found on her kidney (later found to be a renal cell carcinoma), Debbie was sent to Justin Albani, MD, a urologist at Liberty Hospital. After a barrage of tests, Albani suggested surgery to remove the mass—and he suggested using a robot to help.

Albani is one of the many doctors using Liberty Hospital's da Vinci robotic surgery system to assist with surgeries like this one, a laparoscopic partial nephrectomy (removal

of part of the kidney). The system allows the physician an improved and 3-D view of the body with greater dexterity. For the patient, it can mean less blood loss, less pain, a lower risk of infection, and a shorter hospital stay.

The system replicates the surgeon's movements and allows the physician to be more precise, advancing his or her technique, and enhancing the ability to perform complex minimally invasive surgery.

Debbie said the whole process was over before she knew it: "I can remember them giving me a pain injection and rolling me down the hallway, and the next thing I knew I woke back up and said, 'Is it already over?'"

Instead of the traditional surgery done in the past that would have removed the entire organ, this surgical technique allowed Debbie to keep three-fourths of her kidney. Now she is cancer-free and back to her work at a Liberty elementary school.

"I feel like I'm just back to normal," she said. "I can't really even tell I've had the surgery!"

And while some patients might be unaware that such a technology exists – or even a little nervous about its use – Debbie didn't need any convincing.

"She wasn't apprehensive and was very aware of the potential benefits of this technique and thus embraced the technology," Albani said.

That's because her last visit to his office was with her husband, Clayton, who had his prostate removed in 2008 by Albani and his team using the da Vinci system. Retired from General Motors, he is now living cancer-free after a successful robotic-assisted laparoscopic prostatectomy.

Albani said that as the role of robotic surgery expands, more and more patients are becoming interested.

"Most people have a positive

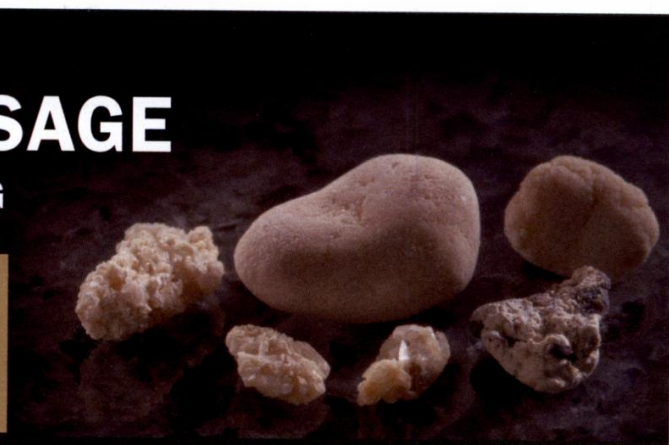


The da Vinci system uses very small instruments that require only dime-sized incisions in the body.

A BLOCKED PASSAGE

KEEPS THE BODY FROM FLOWING

EVERY YEAR MORE THAN A HALF MILLION PEOPLE RUSH TO THE EMERGENCY ROOM WITH SEVERE PAIN IN THEIR LOWER BACK AND NAUSEA CAUSED BY A KIDNEY STONE.



“Kidney stones are more common in the industrialized world because of our diet,” said James Magera, MD, a board-certified urologist at Liberty Hospital. “Dehydration and a high intake of salt and protein are leading causes of kidney stones.”

Stones, which are typically composed of calcium, oxalate, phosphate, and uric acid, are formed when the urine is supersaturated. A stone forming causes no symptoms. However, when the stone exits the kidney, the trouble begins. That stone blocks the flow of urine out of the kidney, causing it to stretch and causing terrible pain.

“If you are suffering from severe pain in the kidney area that won’t go away, I suggest you seek medical attention immediately,” Magera said.

The Liberty Hospital Emergency

Department has a team of physicians and staff available around-the-clock to provide care and treatment for kidney stones.

“When a patient has symptoms of a kidney stone, a CT scan is performed, and we also examine the urine to look for an infection and blood,” Magera said.

“Depending on the size and location, the patient is given several options of treatment.”

If the stone is small, you may be able to pass it with help from medication. Shock-wave lithotripsy is another noninvasive procedure and uses high-energy sound waves to blast the stones into fragments that are then more easily passed in the urine.

“If the stone is large and close to the kidney, the patient has a small chance of passing it without the help of a urologist,” he said.

Depending on the location of the stone, a ureteroscope – similar to

a small telescope – is inserted through the ureter to retrieve it or disintegrate the stone with laser energy. For an extremely large stone, a urologist will partner with an interventional radiologist to insert a small pipe into the kidney to directly treat the stone with larger instruments too big for the urinary channels.

Kidney stone treatments are often performed as outpatient procedures at Liberty Hospital, so you can rest easy at home. Magera advises patients to drink more fluids, reduce their salt intake and moderate their calcium to one gram per day to help reduce the risk of reoccurrence.

For more information about the Liberty Hospital Emergency Department or to find a physician, visit us on the Web at www.libertyhospital.org.

reaction to the thought of ‘robotic surgery’ as they welcome new technology and generally associate it with better outcomes,” he said. “It’s still pretty rare to have a husband and wife whom I have both operated on with the da Vinci system, but it’s certainly becoming more prevalent. What’s more

common is that I have operated on many patients and their friends and family members as they hear about good experiences and outcomes with the system, and that’s very rewarding.”

To learn more about da Vinci, visit www.libertyhospital.org and click on *Robotic Surgery*.

Click on the QR code with your smart phone to see a da Vinci surgeon delicately peel a grape using the robotic system!

