

Hysterectomies less invasive today

Question: Are there different ways a hysterectomy can be performed?

Answer: Thanks to technological advances, women often can undergo a much less invasive hysterectomy procedure than in the past.

Traditionally, hysterectomies have been performed as an open surgery with a large incision in the abdomen. With this approach, women face significant pain, scarring and a long recovery.

Another approach is a vaginal hysterectomy, which involves making an incision inside the vagina and using long instruments to cut the uterus and pull it outside the body. Surgeons have limited vision with this approach and only a few women are candidates.

Currently, many hysterectomies involve a minimally invasive technique called laparoscopic surgery. With this procedure, several narrow tubes are placed into the abdomen through very small incisions. A thin camera (a laparoscope) and surgical instruments are placed through the tubes. This enables the surgeon to see and remove the uterus, through the incisions or vagina.



JENNIFER SIMONE

ASK THE
EXPERT

Laparoscopic hysterectomies often are performed with the da Vinci robot. With this high-tech tool, thin, surgical instruments that move like a surgeon's hand are inserted into the patient through tiny incisions. The surgeon, who sits at a console, views the surgical area in 3-D

high definition. As the surgeon's hands move, the robot's surgical instruments respond in real time. The surgeon can operate very precisely without the need for large incisions. The da Vinci also allows the surgeon to perform a more complex hysterectomy on patients who may have needed an open approach.

Be sure to talk with your physician about the option that is right for you.

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