

U of C Surgeon Pioneers Kidney Cancer Option

Over 30,000 new cases of kidney ("renal") cancer are diagnosed in the U.S. each year. The University of Chicago Hospitals offer the latest treatments for renal cancer, including one that a U of C physician helped pioneer.

Unlike many other cancers, renal cancer does not respond well to chemotherapy or radiation, so the standard treatment has been surgical removal of the entire kidney. However, when detected early, small renal masses are equally responsive to partial kidney removal, with cure rates comparable to total kidney removal. Newer, minimally invasive "laparoscopic" surgical techniques also permit removal of kidneys for cancer, but laparoscopic options have been limited for partial kidney removal.

Now, a new, investigative procedure called laparoscopic renal cryoablation is available at Weiss Memorial Hospital and the main campus. "This procedure destroys malignant renal tumors by freezing them at extremely low temperatures, while preserving the majority of the normal functioning kidney," says Jon Soble, MD, a U of C urologist at Weiss and the main campus. "Cryotherapy to treat other cancers, such as prostate cancer, requires freezing the entire gland and has been less successful because of the inability to also freeze a margin of tissue around the cancer," says Dr. Soble, who helped develop and perform the first laparoscopic renal cryoablation techniques in the U.S. "With laparoscopic renal cryoablation, we can freeze the entire tumor while damaging only a small, but necessary, margin of healthy kidney tissue."

The benefits include reduced post-operative pain, shorter hospital stays, much faster patient recovery, and fewer complications compared to traditional surgery. Since this is a relatively new technique, long-term success rates are still being determined. "Laparoscopic renal cryoablation is an investigative technique that is not for everyone with renal cancer," cautions Dr. Soble. "However, we have had excellent success rates, with no evidence of cancer recurrence to date."



After suffering with Crohn's disease since childhood, Michael Vassolo sought the newest treatments. Although Vassolo had major surgery previously, physicians at Weiss Hospital were able to perform a new minimally invasive surgical technique. Vassolo says, "My surgery turned out perfectly. I'm grateful for this procedure; it saved me from a lot of mental and physical pain." Vassolo is left with only several small scars.

Laparoscopic Surgery: New Option for Crohn's Disease

Many advances are being made at the University of Chicago Hospitals in the treatment of Crohn's disease, a chronic digestive disorder. Crohn's disease affects the lower part of the small intestine, the colon, and other parts of the digestive tract. Symptoms may include persistent diarrhea, abdominal pain, rectal bleeding, fever, weight loss, and skin or eye irritations. In children, Crohn's can cause delays in growth and sexual maturation.

The disorder is incurable. However, advances in medications and surgical techniques are helping patients control Crohn's and return to normal lives. Constantine Frantzides, MD, a U of C surgeon and medical director of the Minimally Invasive Surgery Center at Weiss Memorial Hospital, is using minimally invasive ("laparoscopic") procedures for some patients with Crohn's disease, with great success. "Not all Crohn's patients are candidates for this surgery," says Dr. Frantzides. "But for some people who don't have a lot of adhesions and scar tissue from previous surgeries, this minimally invasive technique is a good option."

Michael Goldberg, MD, a U of C gastroenterologist at Weiss, adds that

this newer surgery is also a good choice for people who don't respond well to medications. "Minimally invasive surgery, possibly coupled with medical management following the procedure, decreases the chances of recurrence of Crohn's," says Dr. Goldberg. Minimally invasive surgery offers key advantages: a much smaller incision, shorter hospital stay and faster recovery.

Michael Vassolo had this procedure performed in January. Because Vassolo had previous surgeries, Dr. Frantzides warned him that the laparoscopic technique might not be effective. Fortunately, Vassolo's previous surgeries had not created much scarring, so Dr. Frantzides proceeded with the minimally invasive procedure. "Doctors I spoke with at other hospitals would only do 'open' procedures," recalls Vassolo.

The U of C Hospitals "have one of the most extensive research centers in the world for inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD) including Crohn's," says Stephen Hanauer, MD, director of the U of C's Logan Center and IBD Research Center. "Our research includes genetic background of IBD, novel therapeutic approaches, and clinical research on risk factors."

Couples Plan Childbirth Their 'Own Way'

Giving birth is one of the most memorable experiences a woman or couple will have. Often, couples share ideas about how they want the childbirth to go. Do they prefer "natural" childbirth or pain medicine? Will the mother labor in bed or walk around? Do they want older siblings or other family members present?

At Weiss Memorial Hospital, couples enjoy the birthing process their own way. "We don't have a lot of rules," says Sheri Gordon, RN, director of women's obstetrics services at Weiss Memorial Hospital. "It's a very family-centered approach. We encourage couples to make it their own experience, however they want it to be."

Weiss offers a full range of options for expectant couples. Women with healthy, routine pregnancies can select an obstetrician/gynecologist or certified nurse-midwife for prenatal care and childbirth. They may labor in an LDRP (labor-delivery-recovery-postpartum room) or choose a waterbirth. A University of Chicago neonatologist is available 24 hours a day to address any concern about the infant's health.

"All of our maternity rooms face Lake Michigan, which can be soothing during labor," says Gordon. "They're all private rooms, and many mothers like the fact that they don't have to leave the room."

Nurses Give Parents a Good Start
Maternity nurses at Weiss Hospital spend a lot of time with new parents, teaching skills such as breastfeeding, diapering and bathing the infant. "Each family has a primary nurse," explains Gordon. Nurses work 12-hour shifts, so often one nurse will help the mother through labor, then the same nurse will help again after the baby is born. "After childbirth, it's nice to deal with a nurse you've already gotten to know," she says.

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NEWS YOU CAN USE

For more information about any of these programs, call 1-888-UCH-0200.

Weiss Memorial Hospital has acquired a state-of-the-art extracorporeal shock wave lithotripter for the non-invasive treatment of **kidney stones**. This represents some of the newest technology in the field of lithotripsy, and is one of several options available through the University of Chicago Hospitals Kidney Stone Center.

The U of C Hospitals' medical oncology group has formed a partnership with Little Company of Mary Hospital and Health Care Centers to offer **cancer-related services** to Southwest Side communities. The affiliation brings the

benefits of our university-based cancer program to the communities which Little Company serves. It also complements Little Company's plans to expand its Regional Cancer Center.

The U of C Hospitals are studying genetic factors related to **attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)**. Families with children between ages 6 and 12 who have diagnosed or suspected ADHD may qualify. Initially, interested families will complete two brief questionnaires about their child's behavior. Children of families who qualify will receive a free day-

long ADHD evaluation, that includes a blood sample for genetic research. Both biological parents must be present.

The main campus features a video lending library for **obstetrics/gynecology** patients. The videos cover many women's-interest topics, including osteoporosis, breast self-exams, menopause, breastfeeding, infant care and childbirth. Videos may be borrowed for one week.

Adults with **chronic mental illness** may be eligible for a study of self-/mutual-help groups such as "GROW"

groups. The study will evaluate whether groups, when combined with traditional treatment, reduce symptoms. Participants must be receiving psychiatric care through the U of C Hospitals and Health System, but do not need to be in a GROW group.

A study of the genetics of **asthma** seeks two groups: 1) Asthma patients at least six years old, with their parents. Adults in this study group must have developed asthma in childhood. 2) Adults with persistent severe asthma. Participants must be non-smokers.