

# Tale Of Two Surgeries

*Laparoscopic surgery offers less pain, quicker recovery than traditional methods*

In the late 1980s, W. Peter Geis, M.D., found himself at the right place, at the right time, to leap to the forefront of a surgical revolution.

Geis was running the surgical residency program at Lutheran General Hospital in Chicago when he was given the task of creating a minimally invasive surgery education program for the hospital.

"We knew laparoscopic or minimally invasive surgery was going to be the big thing of the future, and I was basically given the job of figuring out a way to educate our residents in that area," remembers Geis. "It sort of suited my interests."

Within a short time, Geis became an early champion for minimally invasive surgery—a revolutionary surgical technique. Today, he serves as chief of Minimally Invasive Laparoscopic Surgery and director of the Laparoscopic Fellowship Program at Northwest Hospital Center in Randallstown.

Surgeons performing minimally invasive operations employ small incisions, specialized techniques and new technology to minimize pain and blood loss. Patients benefit from a faster recovery time.

No longer limited to gall bladder removal, surgeons at Northwest Hospital are using minimally invasive techniques for scores of different surgeries: hernia repairs, tumor diagnoses, bowel obstructions, splenectomy, colonoscopy, polyp removal and many others.

Patients enjoy the reduced pain, quicker recovery time and limited scarring associated with minimally invasive techniques. Recent medical research dispelled long lingering doubts of the

technique's effectiveness, and more surgeons are embracing the evidence that minimally invasive techniques are more effective than traditional surgeries.

"Minimally invasive procedures figure to become increasingly common in years to come. I can't imagine any negatives about it," Geis says.

"I remember when I started my practice in 1985, and making large incisions to take out a gall bladder—a patient would have to stay five days in the hospital, sometimes less, but sometimes more," says Eugene Meyer, M.D., a Northwest Hospital surgeon with expertise in minimally invasive surgery. "Now, that same gall bladder surgery is being done laparoscopically, and patients can go home the very same day."

A surgeon performing a minimally invasive procedure need only make an incision wide enough to insert a series of high-tech cameras, probes and other instruments. Some incisions are so tiny that they can be closed with a single stitch.

"There are different techniques," says Gary Hamamoto, M.D., another Northwest Hospital surgeon, comparing traditional surgeries to laparoscopic ones. "The incisions with traditional surgeries are a lot bigger—they can be twice as big."

A growing enthusiasm among doctors will likely fuel significant growth in laparoscopic colon surgeries, just as it has resulted in growth in many other minimally invasive surgeries, because patients will demand it.

For more information about minimally invasive surgery at Northwest Hospital, call 401-601-WELL.



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