

BREAKTHROUGHS

BREAKTHROUGHS IN HEALTH FROM MEMORIAL HERMANN KATY SUMMER 2009

IN HEALTH

New Abdominal Surgery Minimizes Scarring

Memorial Hermann Katy Hospital is now offering the newest frontier in laparoscopic surgery: single-port laparoscopy, or single-port surgery. When used to remove a patient's gallbladder or appendix, this minimally invasive breakthrough allows surgeons to perform the entire operation through a single port, or incision, at the base of the belly button, leaving a scar that is virtually invisible.

One Incision Is Key

By comparison, the open removal of a gallbladder is performed through a 4- or 5-inch incision below the rib cage. In the past 20 years, the open approach has been replaced in most cases with traditional laparoscopic surgery, whereby the operation is performed with several long, thin instruments and a thin camera tube inserted through multiple – as many as three or four – small incisions.

Single-port laparoscopy further improves the procedure with only one incision, which results in fewer complications, faster recovery time and less scarring. This new procedure may even reduce postoperative pain.

“Every incision, even the small ones used for laparoscopic procedures, carries a risk for complications, including infection, wound breakdown and hernia,” says Buckminster Farrow, M.D., a board-certified general surgeon affiliated with Memorial Hermann Katy. “Single-incision laparoscopic surgery allows us to minimize risks and provide a better cosmetic result.”

Not all patients are candidates for this new technique. However, most

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gallbladders and appendixes that are not severely infected can be removed through single-incision laparoscopic surgery.

Benefits of a Single Incision

- Discomfort is reduced because there are no incisions made under the rib cage. Typically, incisions near the rib cage can cause discomfort every time you breathe.
- The risk for wound complications, including hernia, is lower.
- Cosmetic results are better. The incision is hidden within the belly button. So shortly after the procedure, there is either no scar or just a barely visible one.
- The risk for infection and blood loss is reduced.



Dr. Farrow is a board-certified general surgeon.



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